

MAITLAND OF LETHINGTON

AND

THE SCOTLAND OF MARY STUART

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A HISTORY

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

NO period of Scottish history has been productive of more difference of opinion among historical writers than the reign of Mary. There is hardly a single event, from the day of her birth to the day of her death, which has not been the occasion of keen and even vehement debate. I have sometimes felt that the conclusions of competent students have varied so widely because certain preliminary questions have not been sufficiently considered. What are the original authorities for Mary's reign? and what is their comparative value? The latter question is, of course, the more important of the two; yet even the former is not entirely free from dubiety. Excluding one or two English and foreign writers, whose sources

of original information about Scottish affairs were obviously extremely meagre, the contemporary works which are really valuable appear to me to be these:—‘The Chronicles of Scotland,’ by Robert Lindsay of Pitseottie; ‘History of the Reformation in Scotland,’ by John Knox (Laing’s edition, 1846); ‘Rerum Scoticarum Historia,’ by George Buchanan; ‘The Complaynt of Scotland;’¹ ‘Memoirs of Sir James Melvil of Halhill’ (London, 1683); ‘Journal of the Transactions in Scotland, 1570-73,’ by Richard Bannatyne (Edinburgh, 1806); ‘The Autobiography and Diary of James Melvill’ (Edinburgh, 1842); ‘Historical Memoirs,’ by Lord Herries (Abbotsford Club, 1834); ‘The Historie and Life o King James the Sext, 1566-1596’ (Bannatyne Club, 1825); ‘A Diurnal of Remarkable Occurents’ (Maitland Club, 1833); “The Diarey of Robert Birrel” (‘Fragments of Scottish History,’

¹ An admirable analysis of The Complaynt of Scotland is given by the late Dr Ross, in his very suggestive volume on Scottish History and Literature (1884), pp. 247-292. The author is unknown, all that can be affirmed about him is that he was one of those representatives

of the reforming Catholicism who stood by Marie of Lorraine while she pursued a moderate and pacific policy,—an advocate of the French alliance, and a native of the Border counties.—See Dr Murray’s edition of The Complaynt (1872).

by Sir J. G. Dalzell: Edinburgh, 1798—which contains also the contemporary narrative of the battle of Pinkie, “out of the Parsonage of St Mary’s Hill in London, this xxviii of January 1548”); ‘*De origine, moribus, et rebus gestis Scotorum*,’ by John Leslie (Rome, 1578); ‘*The History of Mary Stewart*,’ by Claude Nau (Edinburgh, 1883); ‘*History of the Church of Scotland*,’ by the Right Rev. John Spottiswoode (Edinburgh, 1851); ‘*History of the Kirk of Scotland*,’ by Mr David Calderwood (Edinburgh, 1842); ‘*Ancient Scottish Poems*,’ from the MS. of George Bannatyne (Edinburgh, 1770); ‘*Ancient Scottish Poems*,’ from the MS. of Sir Richard Maitland (Pinkerton, 1786); ‘*Scottish Poems of the Sixteenth Century*’ (Dalzell, 1801); and the official records of parochial, municipal, and ecclesiastical bodies, which have been published by the Spalding, Maitland, Bannatyne, and other Clubs.

Some of these authorities can hardly perhaps in strictness be regarded as original or contemporary. Spottiswoode’s father, no doubt, was an office-bearer in the Reformed Church from the first; but Spottiswoode himself was not born till 1565. Yet whoever carefully examines

his narrative will come to the conclusion that much of his information had been obtained at first hand from men who had been eye-witnesses of the events which he records. The same may be said of Calderwood, although Calderwood was not more than twelve years old when Mary was executed. Calderwood's temper was unhappy; he was, in fact, so *dour*, so irresponsive, so obstinately opinionative, that he ultimately succeeded in alienating his warmest friends;¹ but he was a man of immense industry; he had collected, at one time or other, nearly all the pamphlets and broadsheets on ecclesiastical matters, which formed so large a portion of the current literature of the latter half of the sixteenth century; and he has thus preserved (though it is true that he borrowed largely from Knox, Bannatyne, and Melville) a valuable mass of historical documents which would otherwise have been lost. On these grounds it appears to me that we are justified in regarding

¹ "He was recommended to the first commodious room. Likely he shall not in haste be provided. The man is sixty-six years old; his utterance is unpleasant; his carriage, about the meetings of the Assembly and before, has made him less considerable to divers of his former benefactors."—(Baillie's Letters, 1641.)

both Spottiswoode and Calderwood as original, if not strictly contemporary, authorities.¹

These are the principal contemporary authorities; but there are other writings which are among the most valuable original contributions to the history of the time—the State Papers.

The State Papers, which are accessible to us, were for the most part a sealed book to the contemporary historians. It is a mistake, however, to imagine that the more important of these invaluable documents have only recently been made available for the purposes of historical research. For nearly two centuries the extraordinary interest of the letters and other documents deposited in the great public libraries has been recognised by the Scottish antiquary. Mackenzie, in his ‘*Writers of the Scottish Nation*,’ the successive volumes of which were published between 1708 and 1722, acknowledges his obligations to “Mr

¹ That the authors of *A Diurnal of Remarkable Occurrents*, *Historie of King James the Sext*, and *Birrel's Diary* were living during the reigns of Mary and her son does not, I think, admit of dispute; but the precise manner in which these contemporary records were prepared, and by whom, is not known; and the absence of any direct information on these points is calculated of course to impair their value. The “memoirs” attributed to Lord Herries are of doubtful authenticity; they have admittedly been recast from an earlier manuscript,

Crawfurd's Collections from the Cotton Library in the Lawyers' Library at Edinburgh;" and he prints in the article entitled "William Maitland" three letters by the Secretary, taken from the Crawfurd transcripts. Bishop Keith, whose history appeared in 1734, refers to the same collection,—“The Faculty of Advocates have in their fine library at Edinburgh a tolerably good collection of papers transcribed from the Cotton Library in England;" and he goes on to say that he proposes to place in the same library the copies of letters written in the French language which he had obtained from the Scottish College at Paris. (It does not appear that the intention was carried out; the obliging keeper of the Advocates' Library assures me that, so far as he is aware, the papers to which the Bishop alludes have not been preserved.) Principal Robertson's 'History of Scotland' was published in 1759, and in the preface to the first edition he refers to the Crawfurd Collection ("the library of the Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh contains not only a large collection of original papers relating to Scotland, but copies of others no less curious, which have been preserved by Sir Robert Cotton, or are extant in the public

offices in England") as well as to another collection, in the possession of Mr Goodall, the acute critic of the Casket Letters, who was one of the keepers of the Library. "Mr Goodall, though he knew my sentiments with regard to the conduct and character of Queen Mary to be extremely different from his own, communicated to me a volume of manuscripts in his possession, which contains a great number of valuable papers copied from the originals in the Cottonian Library and Paper Office, by the late Reverend Mr Crawford, Regius Professor of Church History in the University of Edinburgh."

Both of these collections are now in the Advocates' Library. The earlier was made for David Crawford of Drumsoy (mainly by Robert Robertson, A.M., about the year 1707), who presented it to the Faculty of Advocates. Mr David Crawford was the Historiographer-Royal, and the editor of the well-known 'Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland,' which was published in 1706. In the preface to the version of the 'Historie of King James the Sext,' printed for the Bannatyne Club, the editor (Thomas Thomson?) gives an account of the circumstances attending the "downright forgery," of which

Crawfurd was accused when he asserted that his volume of 'Memoirs' was taken verbatim from an authentic manuscript of the period; and he adds,—“Had Mr Matthew Crawford, the contemporary professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Edinburgh, lived to publish his projected work on the History of Queen Mary, his exposure of these 'Memoirs' would have been in a very different tone from that of Bishop Keith,”—Keith having alluded to “the considerable variations between the manuscript and the print” with a mildness unusual (and apparently unappreciated) in antiquarian circles. Whatever his other merits may have been, Mr Matthew Crawford's handwriting is extremely illegible, and compares unfavourably with the admirable caligraphy of Mr Robert Robertson. The copies appear to have been made by the professor himself “from several repositories in England” during a visit he paid to London in 1728. The copies of Sir Nicolas Throckmorton's letters, however, were obtained as early as January 1725 “from the originals which were lent me by Andrew Spreul, writer in Edinburgh;” and several letters from Queen Elizabeth “in the Bishop of Ely's library at Cambridge,” were

transcribed for him by "Mr Thomas Baker, fellow of St John's College, a curious antiquary." I have gone carefully through these collections (the David Crawford Collection is in three volumes, the Matthew Crawford in two), and it appears to me that in either case the selection of documents was made with much skill and judgment; comparatively few papers of first-rate importance have been omitted; the letters of Randolph, Throckmorton, and Knollys, which are of immense value to any historian of the reign of Mary, are given at great length, while there are many interesting letters from Mary, Elizabeth, Cecil, Sadler, Lethington, and others, as well as a selection from the contemporary pasquils,—the invectives of George Buchanan and the ballads of "Tom Truth." When to these are added the original papers collected by James Anderson, Postmaster-General for Scotland, and published by him in 1728, it is obvious that no inconsiderable proportion of the most valuable documents in the great public libraries must have been well known to the Scotch antiquarian writers of the early part of the eighteenth century.

The industry of these early adventurers is the more creditable when the difficulties they had to

contend with are recognised. The State Papers had not then been calendared,—there was not even an inventory. A catalogue of the Cottonian Library had been printed at Oxford in 1696; but it was very imperfect; and it was only in 1802 that the elaborate catalogue now in use was issued.¹ Until quite recently, indeed, little or nothing was done to facilitate the use of the invaluable treasures which were hidden away in public offices and private libraries. Anderson's Collections were not printed until 1728. A selection from the papers at Hatfield, made by Samuel Haynes, the rector, was published in 1740. Another volume, containing papers of a later date, selected by William Murdin, appeared in 1759. The State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, in three volumes, edited by Walter Scott, were published in 1807. Among several important collections, issued during the last fifty years, the selection made by Thomas

¹ The Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library were deposited in fourteen presses, over which were placed the busts of the twelve Cæsars, and of Cleopatra and Faustina. Hence the form of reference which is apt to

puzzle a novice—*e.g.*, "Titus," "Vespasian," &c. Sir Robert Cotton, who was one of a band of well-known antiquaries—Joscelin, Lambard, Camden, Noel—was born 22d Jan. 1570.

Wright in his 'Queen Elizabeth and her Times' (1838) is perhaps the most useful to students of Scottish history. Of the official Calendars, published by authority of the Master of the Rolls, it is impossible to speak too highly; and the Scottish Calendar, covering the period from 1509 to 1589, edited by Markham John Thorpe, is one of the very best of the series. The first part of the Calendar of the Hatfield manuscripts has been published quite recently (1883). It has been prepared with great care, and the abstracts of all the more important documents are unusually full and accurate. In the Fac-similes of the National MSS. of England, Scotland, and Ireland (twelve volumes) to which I have elsewhere referred, many interesting documents illustrating the Mary Stuart period have been excellently reproduced by the process known as photo-zincography. The two bulky volumes which contain selections from the Register of the Privy Council during the reign of Mary were prepared under the supervision of the late Mr Hill Burton; but most of the minutes of general historical interest had been previously published by Keith and others. It may be said with truth that nearly every document, throwing

any light upon the most interesting events of the sixteenth century in Scotland, has now been made fairly accessible to the historical student. One or two may have been overlooked; the treasures of the Vatican have not yet been exhausted;¹ but, speaking generally, little remains to be done. The destruction of the muniments of the Scottish Colleges in France during the Revolution was a real calamity; it was in the Scottish Colleges at Douay and Paris that the letters and reports of Mary Stuart's envoys were stored; and it was from their archives that any complete explanation of the Darnley and Bothwell episodes might have been looked for. But the Colleges were sacked during the Revolution, and the libraries dispersed,—“the most valuable MSS.” we are told, “being sold by the quintal or burnt.”² The Vandals of the Revolution cared for none of these things; and it is highly improbable that any of the valuable manuscripts which were “sold by the quintal” are now in existence.

¹ See the *Narratives of* (1885).

Scottish Catholics under Mary Stuart and James VI., edited by William Forbes Leslie, S.J. | ² Lord Herries's *Memoirs*. Preface, p. xxv (Abbotsford Club, 1836).

No writer on the age of Mary can overestimate his obligations to Sir William Cecil. Cecil was the most industrious of English statesmen of the first order. His activity, indeed, was almost incredible. The papers which he left behind him are widely distributed. They form no inconsiderable portion of the national records,—the State Papers connected with Mary and Elizabeth in the Library at Hatfield, in the Public Record Office, in the Cottonian, Harleian, and Lansdowne Collections at the British Museum, drafted or endorsed by the great Lord Burleigh, being among the most valuable we possess.

The comparative value of the letters of Randolph, Drury, Sadler, Throckmorton, Knollys, and other correspondents of the English Secretary will be dealt with hereafter, in connection more particularly with the inquiry into the genuineness of the Casket Letters; but I may say here that it has been too much the custom to regard “original authorities” with unreasoning reverence, and to accept without question whatever is found in their pages. The narrative of a contemporary is not conclusive. It must be submitted to the ordinary critical tests before it can be allowed to pass muster. This rule is

of general application ; but it applies with special force for various reasons to the writers of the sixteenth century. Society was divided into two hostile camps ; and those in the one regarded those in the other with a peculiar energy of dislike. In intestine strife the usages and courtesies of war are too often neglected ; when civil dissensions are intensified by theological animosities, the conflict attains the maximum of bitterness. There is barely one of the writers I have named on whose unverified testimony it is safe to rely. Lindsay of Pitscottie is regarded by many (to some extent unjustly, I think) as the most credulous and unveracious of Scottish annalists ; but Knox, for one, was as credulous as Pitscottie. The Reformer's vigorous understanding was clouded by superstition, and warped by prejudice ; and the dramatic force and intense vitality of his narrative must not blind us to the fact that he was a man of violent and unreasoning antipathies, who listened greedily to idle rumour and the gossip of the market-place.

The evidence of the writers of either faction must therefore be subjected to the closest scrutiny, and accepted with the utmost reserve.

They must be compared one with another, and the conflicting evidence carefully weighed. A great German historian has demonstrated that it is possible by careful analysis to learn where a writer obtained the "facts" which he records; and every statement made by Knox or Buchanan or Melville must, when necessary or practicable, be traced back to its source. A contemporary writer is truly valuable only for what he has garnered from his own experience; and his authority varies according to the nature of the subject. Knox, for instance, was intimately acquainted (no man more so) with the proceedings of the Congregation and of the General Assembly; but he knew little, except from unfriendly rumour, of what was doing at Court. His relations with the Court were strained or hostile; during many months, indeed, he was barely on speaking terms even with Moray; and he regarded Mary and her mother with the most vindictive animosity. His eye was jaundiced; he saw men "as trees, walking"; and the most innocent natural phenomena were habitually translated by his morbidly vivid imagination into supernatural portents. Thus the unpleasant fog, the thick easterly "haar," which hung over

the Forth when Mary landed at Leith, and to which Edinburgh from its position is peculiarly exposed, was the expression of divine displeasure at her return. "The very face of heaven, the time of her arrival, did manifestly speak what comfort was brought unto this country with her—to wit, sorrow, dolour, darkness, and all impiety; for in the memory of man, that day of the year, was never seen a more dolorous face of the heaven, than was at her arrival. The sun was not seen to shine two days before, nor two days after. That forewarning gave God unto us; but, alas! the most part were blind." (Turning to Brantome, we find that the frivolous Frenchman saw nothing but a dense fog—*grand brouillard*). Again (to take another instance), Knox asserts, or at least insinuates, that Marie of Lorraine was the mistress of Cardinal Beaton, and that her daughter was the mistress of Chastelard; and modern historians have not been averse to adopt these cruel calumnies on his unsupported testimony. But the slightest examination shows that the Reformer was not in a position in either case to speak with authority; that he could have had no direct or personal knowledge; and that he merely repeated the

malicious tittle-tattle of ignorant but industrious gossips.¹

To sift in such cases truth from fable, the chaff from the wheat, implies the exercise of what has been called the historical faculty. The historical faculty is an imposing name; but the historical faculty in this connection is only common-sense applied to the past. And the common-sense which is severely critical, not to say sceptical, is the common-sense which must be brought to bear upon the records of Mary's reign. Many of the judicial depositions of the age, for instance, were obtained by fraud or torture; the wholesome scepticism of common-sense teaches us

¹ "At the first sight of the Cardinal, she said, 'Welcome, my lord; is not the king dead?' What moved her so to conjecture, diverse men are of divers judgments. Many whisper that of old his part was in the pot, and that the suspicion thereof caused him to be inhibited the Queen's company. However the tidings liked her, she mended with as great expedition of that daughter as ever she did before of any son she bare."—*History of the Reformation*, i. 92. The conversation between Mary and her brother

as to Chastelard which Knox records is obviously apocryphal. —(ii. 368) Knox, of course, was not present at the interview, and he could not have obtained his information from Moray, for Moray was at that time so devoted to Mary that he incurred the resentment of the Reformer. "In all that time the Earl of Moray was so fremmit (strange) to Johne Knox, that neither by word nor write was there any communication betwixt them."—(i. 461.)

to regard them with acute suspicion. They are nearly, if not altogether, as valueless to the cautious historian as the confessions of midnight irregularities extorted by similar means from the witches. He dismisses without hesitation the hallucinations of the wretched creatures who figure so largely in the records of the criminal and spiritual Courts of the Reformation ; but he has to deal (and these, of course, require more delicate handling) with moral as well as physical improbabilities. A story is related upon what appears to be unimpeachable authority which is morally as incredible as a moonlight ride on a broomstick. Yet here again, neither timidly accepting nor rashly rejecting the evidence produced, he must allow his own judgment, his own sense of the fitness of things and the unities of character, free play. Hume has demonstrated with irrefutable logic that it is always more probable that the reporter was mistaken or misinformed than that a miracle was worked ; and a moral miracle must be nearly as incapable of proof as a physical. To both we may apply the Roman proverb,—*I would not believe it were it told me by Cato.*¹

¹ "When any one tells me | that he saw a dead man re-

It is necessary to insist on this view ; for there are pitfalls on every side of the unwary traveller in this difficult country ; and the consistent application of the simple principle that it is more probable that the reporter was somehow mistaken than that an event morally or intrinsically incredible occurred, tends unquestionably to remove certain of the difficulties which beset his path. To take one or two examples. There is a report in Bannatyne's Transactions of a sermon, in which the ministers of the Church are exhorted to pray for the Queen, said to have been preached in St Giles', on Sunday, 17th June 1571, by Alexander Gordon, Bishop of

stored to life, I immediately consider with myself whether it be more probable that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact which he relates should really have happened. I weigh the one miracle against the other ; and according to the superiority which I discover, I pronounce my decision, and always reject the greater miracle. If the falsehood of his testimony would be more miraculous than the event which he relates, then, and not till then, can he pretend to command my belief

or opinion"—On Human Understanding, section 10—Of Miracles. Whately's "Historic Doubts concerning Napoleon Buonaparte," which was meant as an answer to Hume, is essentially a more sceptical work than the essay on Miracles ; for if human testimony regarding the contemporary events of the nineteenth century may be so logically discredited, what credit can be attached to stories which belong to a remote past and an age of faith ?

Galloway.¹ Gordon, who was a staunch supporter of Mary, having been indeed on more than one occasion her Commissioner to the English Court, is reported to have said,—“And, further, all sinners ought to be prayed for; gif we should not pray for sinners, for whom should we pray, seeing that God came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Saint David was a sinner, and so was she; Saint David was an adulterer, and so is she; Saint David committed murder in slaying Urias for his wife, and so did she; but what is this to the matter; the more wicked that she be, her subjects should pray for her to bring her to the spirit of repentance.”² This report of the Bishop’s discourse has been used to show that even her own partisans admitted that Mary was guilty of the crimes with which she was charged. But to impartial critics it seemed so incredible that one of the Queen’s own party should have publicly accused his sovereign of murder and adultery, that they preferred to hold that the pre-

¹ It appears, however, that the sermon could *not* have been delivered on that day.

² Journal of the Transac-

tions in Scotland, by Richard Bannatyne. Edinburgh, 1806 : p. 181.

tended discourse was an invention of the enemy,—it bore, they maintained, “evident marks of forgery.”¹ The theory of forgery, however, is not necessary,—it is easy to see how a perfectly honest misunderstanding might have arisen. The sermon was probably published as a broad-sheet,—a condensed and imperfect report having been supplied to the printer by one of the audience. The Bishop’s argument was obviously to the effect that *even on the assumption* that Mary was guilty of the crimes imputed to her, she was, as a sinner as well as their sovereign, entitled to the prayers of her ministers. He was putting, for the sake of argument, a hypothetical case.² This, I think, is an easy and natural solution; but the report of another admission to the same effect, said to have been made by John Leshe, Bishop of Ross, presents greater difficulties.

¹ Senators of the College of Justice, by Brunton and Haig (1832), p. 131.

² Or was it a *jeu d’esprit*, a satirical effusion directed against the Bishop as much as against Mary? This view is rather supported by a later passage, in which the preacher confesses “this vile carcass of mine to

be the most vile carrion, and altogether given to the lusts of the flesh, yea, and I am not ashamed to say the greatest trumper in all Europe, until sic time as it pleisit God to call upon me and mak me one of his chosen vessels, in whom he has poured the spirit of his evangel.”

The well-known historian of Scotland was the indefatigable servant of Mary. He was for years her constant adviser; after he was separated from her, he went from Court to Court, proclaiming her innocence and denouncing her wrongs. Yet, in a letter from Thomas Wilson to Lord Burleigh (November 8, 1571), Leslie is represented as bringing the most grotesque and monstrous charges against the mistress whom he served with loyal fidelity to the end,—charges far more sweeping, indeed, than the Confederate Lords had ventured to offer. “He saith, further, that the Queen is not fit for any husband. For, first, she poisoned her husband, the French King; again, she hath consented to the murder of her late husband, Lord Darnley; thirdly, she matched with the murderer, and brought him to the field to be murdered; and, last of all, she pretended marriage with the Duke, with whom (as he thinketh) she would not long have kept faith, and the Duke should not have had the best days with her.”¹ It appears to me that this narrative is intrinsically incredible. I do not undertake to offer any explanation; but—and

¹ Calendar of Hatfield Manuscripts, p. 564.

this is a question which every reader must decide for himself—is it possible to believe that, in conversation with a comparative stranger, who was moreover an agent of the English Government, Leslie, that “most pious, able, and devoted servant” (as Mary called him in a letter to Philip, shortly before her death), did connect, or could have connected, his mistress’s name with such vile and indeed irrational criminality? Here again we fall back upon Hume; we may, or may not, be able to explain the misunderstanding; but—the fact being in itself incredible—*I would not believe it were it told me by Cato.*

The period to which my examination of the State Papers has been specially directed comprises the thirty years between the death of James V. and the death of Maitland (1542-1573). It has been necessary for me to treat incidentally of statesmen, soldiers, and poets who belonged to an earlier time; but, except in the case of the Comyns, I have made no special studies for the purpose, and even in the case of the Comyns, I have constantly felt that the materials which I have endeavoured to arrange required systematic revision. In the meantime, and until some more exhaustive inquiry has been completed,

my provisional sketch may be accepted for what it is worth.

Among writings not contemporary, which are more or less instructive for this period, the following may be noted :—Mackenzie's 'Lives of Scottish Writers;' ¹ Bishop Keith's 'Affairs of Church and State in Scotland' (Spottiswoode Society, 1844-45); Robertson's 'History of Scotland'; Douglas's 'Peerage of Scotland' (2 vols., 1813); Scott's 'Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border'; Chalmers's 'Life of Queen Mary'; Riddell's 'Peerage and Consistorial Law'; Nichol's 'History of the Scottish Poor Law'; M'Crie's 'Life of John Knox'; 'Historical Account of the Senators of the College of Justice'; Robert Chambers's writings on Scottish Antiquities; Hallam's 'Constitutional History of England'; Skene's 'Celtic Scotland'; ² Froude's 'History of

¹ Dr Mackenzie was a careless, credulous, and uncritical writer; but, born in 1669, he belonged to an age when authentic traditions of the previous century were still current, and some of these he, and he alone, has recorded.

² The extraordinary accuracy and keen critical acumen of Dr Skene's *Celtic Scotland* can-

not be lauded too highly; and though it deals mainly with the Scot before his institutions had been feudalised, it forms the groundwork on which all later history must be based. It is altogether a monument of solid and enduring work which has barely been appreciated as yet—except by a few laborious scholars.

England;'¹ Burton's 'History of Scotland;'
Tytler's 'History of Scotland;'
Schiern's 'Life of Bothwell;'
Sir John Graham Dalzell's antiquarian reprints (Sir John was a member of the Scottish bar, who devoted himself between 1798 and 1848 to the republication in a convenient form of many rare and remarkable tracts illustrative of Scottish history);
Cosmo Innes's 'Scotland in the Middle Ages,' and 'Sketches of Early Scottish History;'
Walcot's 'The Ancient Church of Scotland;'
Hartings's 'Extinct British Animals;'
and the voluminous Mary Stuart

¹ Only the man or woman who has had to work upon the mass of Scottish material in the Record Office can properly appreciate Mr Froude's inexhaustible industry and substantial accuracy. His point of view is very different from mine; but I am bound to say that his acquaintance with the intricacies of Scottish politics during the reign of Mary appears to me to be almost, if not quite, unrivalled. I am afraid, from what I have heard, that Mr Froude's proposed History of the Empire under Charles V. has been definitely put aside. One may be permitted to doubt whether even the duties im-

posed upon him by Mr Carlyle's testament, and which he has discharged with such eminent (if unappreciated) sincerity and candour, should have been allowed to stand in the way. The nearest approach to a comprehensive European view of the Revolutionary movement of the 15th and 16th centuries is, of course, to be found in the successive works of the great German historian, whose death is announced while these pages are going through the press—Leopold von Ranke; but Mr Symonds and the author of Euphion have presented us with isolated "studies" of great interest.

literature, from Goodall, Tytler, and Whittaker to Hosack, Bell, and Swinburne.

I have considered it inadvisable to burden the text of this preliminary volume¹ with copious footnotes. Such a practice, by interrupting the flow of the narrative, tends to weaken the interest and distract the attention of the reader. The leading authorities are specified in this introduction; and an Appendix of Notes and Illustrations, containing numerous extracts from, and references to, original writers and records, is in preparation. If I am not mistaken, the Appendix will be found by no means dry,—the direct and *naïve* comments of contemporary observers having generally a natural freshness which the more laboured narrative of the historian fails to retain. I am not conscious in any case of missing the exact sense of the passages which I have taken from State papers and other contemporary documents; but I have ventured

¹ I propose to divide my narrative into three Books. The first Book is contained in the volume now published, and includes the period from Lethington's birth to Mary's return to Scotland in 1561. The second Book will cover the period between 1561, when Mary returned, and 1567, when she abdicated; the Third, the period between the abdication and Maitland's death in 1573.

not unfrequently to substitute a modern for an obsolete word; and, as a rule, I do not adhere to the spelling. I have made one exception only—certain of Lethington's letters, printed now for the first time, are given exactly as they were written.¹ The purist of a Text Society may properly enough resent any tampering with an original text; but the business of a writer of history is to make himself intelligible to his contemporaries, and it is a mistake to use language (except perhaps when specially characteristic and graphic—as John Knox's often is) which has become obsolete, and which, without a glossary, cannot be understood by a fairly intelligent reader of modern English.

A history written during the evenings of busy days, devoted to other work, is produced under obvious disadvantages. Yet it may possibly be argued on the other hand that

“The sense that handles daily life,
That keeps us all in order more or less,”

and that is as valuable to the man of letters as

¹ The letters referred to will be found in the second volume, in the chapter devoted to the Matland - Sussex correspondence. About two hundred of Matland's letters are in existence.

to the man of action, is braced and invigorated by the habitual intercourse with all sorts and conditions of men which the secluded scholar does not enjoy.

I cannot expect that the conclusions which I have ventured to formulate in this book will be accepted by the zealots on either side. The Calvinistic or Puritan view of the Scottish Reformation has had brilliant apologists; so has the Catholic; but the policy, moderately conservative, rationally progressive, of the party that Maitland led, has been treated with consistent unfairness. Yet Maitland, according to the view I hold, was in complete intellectual accord with the prudent compromise which Elizabeth and Cecil, which the English Church and the English Commonwealth, represent. Somewhat behind the iconoclastic Radicalism, somewhat in advance of the reforming Catholicism, he followed in politics and religion the *via media*. The moral and material prosperity of Scotland is traced by many eloquent writers to the revolutionary movement of which Knox was the soul. It may be reasonably doubted how far this view is consistent with a sound

construction of the facts of history. The Church of Knox, after a stormy struggle of a hundred years, during which it had failed to conciliate the aristocracy on the one hand, or the sober intelligence of the middle and lower classes on the other, burnt itself out in Covenanter and Cameronian. The Church that survived, the Church that is identified with the true social development of Scotland, is the Church of Maitland and Spottiswoode, of Forbes and Leighton, of Carstares and Robertson, of Robert Lee and Norman Macleod and John Tulloch.¹ The theocratic government which the extreme party in Church and State desired to establish was inconsistent with the genius of a free people; the Revolution of 1689, in spite of obvious limitations, was the beginning of a better order of things; and to the Union, far more than to the Reformation, the amazing progress which Scotland has made since the early years of the eighteenth century is to be ascribed.

¹ In associating these names, I assume of course that there is in religious societies a moral and spiritual continuity (the apostolical succession of Christian

life and conviction),—a continuity which may be held perhaps to be even more essential than that which is ecclesiastical only.

The famous minister of Queen Elizabeth was, during many anxious years, the constant correspondent of William Maitland; long after Maitland's tragic end, Lord Burleigh, as we know, looked back with pathetic regret to the interruption of "the old familiar friendship and strict amity":—Were the pretty frivolities of the Age of Dedications still in vogue, a record of the life and times of "Lethington" would have been most fitly inscribed to the illustrious minister of Queen Victoria, who maintains undimmed the civic renown of the Cecils, and who values, as Maitland valued, sobriety in religion and sanity in politics.

J. S.

THE HERMITAGE OF BRAID,
15th Oct. 1886.

BOOK I.

FROM MAITLAND'S BIRTH TO
MARY STUART'S RETURN



MAITLAND OF LETHINGTON.



CHAPTER ONE.

LETHINGTON AND THE LAMMERMUIR.

WILLIAM MAITLAND of Lethington, one of the most remarkable Scotsmen of the sixteenth century, was born about the year 1528. The accurate and industrious David Laing says generally that he was born some time between 1525 and 1530; and we may therefore conclude that the date can be only approximately determined. If he was born in 1525, he was forty-eight years old when he died; if he was born in 1530, he was not more than forty-three. A brief life, according to either reckoning; but one into which much was crowded.

The country of the Lammermuirs is the coun-

try of the Maitlands. They owned the lands that lie between the upper waters of the Leader and the Tyne,—their old keep of Thirlstane being built upon an affluent of the Leader—the more modern Tower of Lethington rising from a conspicuous plateau on the Tyne near Haddington. Some fifteen or twenty miles of a rough moorland track lead from the vale of the Leader to the vale of the Tyne. It is a country with a character of its own; and the pedestrian who traverses these bare high-lying valleys, while the mists of an autumnal morning are driving round the Lammerlaw, will not readily forget the impression they make. Even now it is a place where the characteristics of the solitary sheep-walks of the Border dales are appreciated with exceptional vividness. There is nothing Alpine about the scenery,—it would be absurd to associate the mountain glory and the mountain gloom with these unromantic uplands. The rocks which dip into the sea at Fast Castle and St Abb's Head are very grand; but of course, regarded simply as scenery, they have nothing in common with the inland range to which they truly belong. Yet the pastoral solitude of the region is not unimpressive. From Tollishill to Yester—ten miles as the crow flies—there is not a shepherd's hut. The tramp who misses the track in winter or early spring

may be lost for days. The snow lies deep, and the mists—the easterly “haar,” to which a range that skirts the shore of the German Ocean is peculiarly exposed, as well as the true mountain mists—are blinding. From the summit of the Lammerlaw one-third of Scotland lies at our feet; but there are comparatively few points of vantage from which a distant view can be obtained. To the eye of a stranger, indeed, nothing can be more confusing than this intricate network of valleys, this convolution of glens, this vast billowy plain, where the waves rise and fall in soft and tender lines, and one rounded summit succeeds another with almost wearisome iteration. The only token of human life on their bracken-covered sides is the occasional sheep-pen—which, however, when empty and deserted, seems somehow to add to the loneliness of the surroundings. What sounds there are serve only to deepen the impression of absolute quietude,—the croak of a raven, the whir of the moorfowl, the wail of whaup and plover, the bleating of the sheep.

The hill-country of Lauderdale even to-day is seldom explored. There are probably a hundred glens which are not visited once a-year, except by the shepherds. Others where grouse are sufficiently abundant may be shot over about the Twelfth of August for a week. The birds,

however, on these low-lying moors (the Lammerlaw itself is only seventeen hundred feet above the sea) are shy and wild, and after the first day or two quite unapproachable. Such a district as I am describing must have been—three hundred years ago—wellnigh impenetrable. From Soutra to Penshiel there was one track only across the hills which a horseman could ride. The slopes of the Lammermuir were at an early period dense with forest and populous with game. In a manuscript history of one of its moorland parishes, the author observes that the names of the properties were mostly taken from those of the wild animals that used to haunt them. It was “a place which of old had great woods, with wild beasts, from which the dwellings and hills were designed, as Wolfstruther, Roe cleugh, Hindside, Hartlaw, and Harelaw.” The wolf and the forest had possibly disappeared before Lethington was born; but, even apart from savage animals and primeval thickets, it is obvious that during an unquiet and turbulent reign, his native valleys must have been well suited for concealment and defence. Within a day’s ride of the capital, the sanctuaries of the Lammermuirs, sparsely peopled by clansmen whose fidelity was absolute, were specially convenient to a statesman who had many enemies. We hear, indeed, on more than one occasion, that

the Secretary is "in hiding among the hills."

Thirlstane—the modern Thirlstane of the Earls of Lauderdale—stands within a mile of the curious old burgh of Lauder, where a system of land-tenure virtually amounting to peasant-proprietorship has existed for many hundred years. It seems to have worked fairly well,—than the burgesses of this secluded community, a more thriving, thrifty, well-to-do set of Scotsmen are hardly to be met with this side the Atlantic. The Maitlands, quitting the cradle of the family in a neighbouring strath, appear to have latterly appropriated the burgh fortalice of Lauder. The central tower of the original fortress still remains; but first the Chancellor—William Maitland's brother—and then the Duke, adapted it to the more refined requirements of modern life. The park, through which the Leader winds, is finely wooded; one or two of the trees—a noble sycamore, a still nobler ash—are of immense age; but the famous bridge, over which "Bell-the-Cat" and his brother nobles hanged the unlucky favourites of James III., has been removed. There are many pictures of the Duke,—pictures in which the story of swift deterioration may be plainly read; a lovely Countess by Gainsborough or Romney; another delicate and winning face by a French artist;

all the Earls for two hundred years; and three or four portraits of undoubted antiquity, which are said to be those of William Maitland and his brother. A strong family likeness runs through them all; the character of a politic and powerful race has impressed itself upon their faces. It may be doubted, however, whether any entirely authentic portrait of William Maitland is in existence; that in 'Pinkerton,' which is said to be taken from the Lauder portrait, is a manifest caricature of the original; on the other hand, an engraving in the 'Iconographia Scotica' reproduces with tolerable fidelity one of the portraits in the Great Hall. The black velvet robe is trimmed with fur; the broad white collar is richly laced. The hair is of a delicate auburn,—so are the eyes, which are almond-shaped. The nose is long and peaked; the lines of the mouth, partly covered by the pointed moustache, are strong and masterful. There is nothing severe or sinister about the face; one feels, indeed, that it might become on occasion keenly sarcastic; but for the moment the air of absolute composure, of an almost sluggish masterfulness, is complete. The curiously arched eyebrows remind one of the Mephistopheles in Retsch's outlines; and the expression of repose, the accentuation of languor, is perhaps only a trick of the diplomatist, who, while seemingly

inert and incurious, follows with instinctive vigilance every feint of his adversary. So the matter stands. We cannot positively affirm that any portrait of William Maitland has been preserved; but even if it could be demonstrated that the Secretary did not "sit" to the artist, it is quite possible (the family traits, as I have said, being so persistent and indelible) that we have a good deal of "Lethington" in this really admirable bit of work by an earlier Jamesone.

The surroundings of the old keep of Thirlstane, in the adjoining dale, will appear familiar to those who know the Border landscape of the late George Harvey. There is the long shoulder of the pastoral hill, patched with heather and flecked with sunshine; the brawling mountain torrent hurrying down to meet the Leader and the Tweed; the strong square tower, with its immemorial ashes and knotted and twisted thorns, perched on the high table-land which rises steeply from the water-edge; the rounded backs of the Lammermuirs along the northern sky. Of a summer evening, when, though the sun has set behind "Ealdon's triple height," daylight still lingers in the west, and flushes the zenith, it is difficult to imagine a scene more peaceful, or in some aspects more pathetic. Save for complaint of curlew and plover, the silence is unbroken, and the haunting fascina-

tion of the Borderland may then be felt at its best ;

“The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.”

When I stood the other day within its crumbling walls the cuckoo and the corn-crake were calling. The corn-crake and the cuckoo are not exactly modern inventions. They must have been vocal in the valleys when robber-chiefs dwelt here among armed retainers, and vigilantly watched the rough and dangerous track that led across the hills from the Scottish capital to the North-umbrian moors. We associate these sounds with utter peacefulness and the sweet amenities of the spring ; what associations did they stir, what feelings did they rouse, in the breasts of the freebooters of the Border ? The whole environment of our life has so completely changed, that it is wellnigh impossible to realise to ourselves, even imaginatively, the conditions, moral, intellectual, and physical, of that fierce and turbulent society.

But Lethington is the ancestral seat that is most closely associated with William Maitland. It is probable that he was born within the old tower ; there his boyhood and early manhood were passed ; the “Politician’s Walk” is still pointed out by the local antiquary ; his friends in Haddington and elsewhere knew him as “the

young Laird"; in all the diplomatic correspondence of the age "the Lord of Lethington" is a famous and familiar name. To Cecil, to Elizabeth, to Norfolk, to Mary Stuart, "Lethington" was the synonym for the gayest wit and the keenest intellect in Scotland. The hill-country is close at hand; but the castle stands on the plain,—the fertile Lothian plain that lies between the Lammermuir and the sea. The great central tower of the "Lamp of Lothian"—the Abbey Church of Haddington—and the great square keep of Lethington, are the two historical monuments of the district where John Knox and William Maitland were born. They have stood the wear and tear of centuries; many centuries will pass before they cease to be landmarks.

The castle of Lethington is perhaps the finest existing example of a kind of building which united enormous strength with entire simplicity. There is some little attempt at ornamentation about the roof; the rain is carried off through the grinning mouth of griffin or goblin; half-a-dozen narrow windows and narrower loopholes pierce the walls at irregular intervals; but otherwise the precipice is sheer—no shelf or ledge breaks the fall. From the flat plain, this prodigious piece of simple, massive, monumental masonry rises like a natural rock. The walk round the battlements is as the path along a

sea-cliff. The fine park is thickly wooded; but a broad, straight, grassy avenue, twice the breadth of the castle, has been cut across the forest,—somewhat formal, like the approach to a French chateau,—through which a delightful glimpse of green fields and winding rivulet and purple moorland is gained. The interior for three centuries or more can have undergone little, if any, change; the kitchen, the great hall, the bedrooms, the vaulted roof, the winding staircase *in* the wall, the arms of the Maitlands above the doorway, are in perfect preservation. Before the introduction of artillery, such a fortress was virtually impregnable. When the owner had closed and barricaded the one massive oaken door on the ground-floor, the waves of war beat around it in vain.¹ Life inside the walls, to be sure, must have been somewhat flat and monotonous; but the roof protected by its stone balustrade was always open to air and sky, and formed probably the favourite lounge of the imprisoned inmates. Built midway of a gentle slope facing the

¹ The author of 'A Diurnal of Occurrents' says that the castle was burnt by the English on 15th September 1549. "Upon the 15th day thereof the Englishmen past out of Haddington, and brunt it and

Leidington, and past away without any battell, for the pest and hunger was richt evil amangst them." The damage, however, could not have been great.

Lammermuir, the view from the highest turret is extremely fine. The towers of the Abbey Church, indeed (the Abbey lying to the north in the shallow basin of the Tyne), are not in sight; but from east to west the billowy sweep of wooded knoll and yellow strath appears well-nigh illimitable. Coalston and Salton, Yester and Whittinghame—places renowned in history and legend—are near at hand. So are Soutra and the Lammerlaw. The capital itself (or the heights in its neighbourhood) may once have been visible on a clear day; but on *that* side the spreading branches of a circle of venerable limes now rise above the roof.

Lethington has passed away from the Maitlands, and the name of the great historical mansion is not to be found on the map. The Duke sold it to the cousin of a famous hoyden,—the saucy and frivolous Frances Stewart of De Grammont's scandalous chronicle. It is said, indeed, to have been virtually given to him by the spoilt beauty after she became Duchess of Lennox,—Lord Blantyre being a poor man, the purchase-money was advanced to him by his cousin. Hence the fantastic modern name—Lennoxlove. Thus also it comes about that the heirlooms of the Maitlands are to be found, not at Lethington, but at Thirlstane; and the only picture of much interest on the walls is that of

Frances Stewart herself, painted by Sir Peter for the Duke.

“Fife and the Lothians” was then the political heart of Scotland; and Maitland was lucky in being born within twenty miles of the capital. No fitter birthplace, indeed, for a Scottish statesman could have been selected. The Lauderdale Maitlands, it is true, did not rank with the great governing houses of Hepburn or Hamilton or Hume; but, though commoners themselves, they were allied by marriage with the nobility of Lothian; the family was now prosperous and powerful; and their lineage was not undistinguished.

Before the Leader joins the Tweed, it passes the hamlet of Earlstoun,—Earlstoun being the modern corruption of Ercildoun. Thomas the Rhymer is a somewhat shadowy and unsubstantial figure, and modern scepticism treats his prophetic utterances with scant respect. But even the historical iconoclast does not venture to impeach the authority of the feudal conveyance which has been duly recorded, and charters granted by or to the Laird of Ercildoun are still in evidence. That the poet was married is another fact which has been fully established; and his wife, if the unbroken tradition of Lauderdale may be accepted, was a daughter of the then knight of Thirlstane—the ancestor of William Maitland.

I do not know if this knight of Thirlstane can be identified with the "auld Maitland" who is the hero of a well-known ballad recovered by Sir Walter Scott from the recitation of Mrs Hogg—the venerable mother of the Ettrick Shepherd. This Sir Richard was the owner of Thirlstane during the war of independence, and his obstinate defence of the old castle, judging from the fragments that remain, must have furnished a popular theme to many a Border minstrel. Among the romantic figures dear to the common people commemorated by the Bishop of Dunkeld, "Maitland with his auld beard grey" occupies a prominent place. According to the ballad, the English army under Edward, after harrying the Merse and Teviotdale, "all in an evening late," came to a "darksome house" upon the Leader. The darksome house was Thirlstane, where a grey-haired knight, in answer to Edward's summons, "set up his head, and crackit richt crouselly." He had got, he said, his "gude auld hoose," from the Scottish king, and he would keep it as long as it would keep him, against English king or earl. The siege lasted for more than a fortnight; but each assault was repulsed; and at last auld Maitland was left "hail and feir" "within his strength of stane." The king was bitterly mortified; and when at a later period he met

young Maitland abroad, the face of the stern old father—"Sic a gloom on ae browhead!"—still haunted his memory. "For every drap o' Maitland blude, I'll gie a rig o' land." The young Scottish soldier was nowise loath to accept the invitation; and when he had got the representative of "the auld enemy" fairly under foot, he gave him characteristically short shrift.

"It's ne'er be said in France, nor e'er
In Scotland when I'm hame,
That Englishman lay under me
And e'er gat up again."

Between this Sir Richard, whose exploits were "sung in many a far countrie, albeit in rural rhyme," and the Sir Richard of Mary Stuart's Court, the figures of the successive owners of Thirlstane are somewhat dim and undistinguishable. A William de Mautlant of Thirlstane joined the Bruce, and died about 1315. His son, Sir Robert Maitland, who, on 17th October 1345, had a charter of the lands of Lethington, fell next year at the battle of Durham. John, the son of another William, married Lady Agnes Dunbar, daughter of Patrick, Earl of March—March was one of the greatest of the great earldoms—and died about 1395. Then Robert Maitland of Thirlstane was in 1424 one of the hostages for James I. William Maitland, the father of the later Sir Richard, and the grand-

father of Queen Mary's Secretary, married a daughter of George, second Lord Seton, and fell at Flodden. It is plain from this brief retrospect that for several hundred years the ancestors of "Lethington" had held a considerable and distinguished place among the great county families of the Merse. The name, moreover, had been intimately associated with some of the most stirring events in the national annals. We need not wonder, therefore, that the second Sir Richard should have prided himself—as he did—upon his descent. He was "dochter's son" of the noble house of Seton; and he "collectit, gaderit, and set furth" with keen enjoyment the records of that gallant race. But he was probably thinking of the untitled gentlemen who had lived at Thirlstane on the Leader—son succeeding father in an unbroken line for many generations—when he wrote, with pardonable complacency, in the prologue to his history,—
"For we see some men, barons' and small gentlemen's houses, which began before some of the said great houses (now decayed), and continued all their time, and yet stands lang after them in honour and sufficient living."

Of this Sir Richard—the famous father of the more famous son, whose life I have undertaken to write—a good deal of information through various channels has come down to us, and may

here be pieced together. He was ninety years old when he died in 1585; so that he must have been born four or five years before the close of the fifteenth century. He succeeded to the family estates in 1513; and about 1521 married Mariot Cranstoun, the daughter of the Laird of Crosbie. They had seven children—three sons and four daughters. Both Sir Richard and Lady Maitland attained extreme old age—the wife dying on the day her husband was buried. During his long life he held high office in the State,—Keeper of the Privy Seal, Commissioner to England, Senator of the College of Justice. He was, according to the poet who wrote his epitaph (Thomas Hudson, “the unremembered name of him”), “ane worthy knight, baith valiant, grave, and wise;” and the eulogy was not undeserved. His “steadfast truth and uncorrupted faith” had never been impugned either by friend or foe.¹ Enemies indeed he had none;

¹ Knox indeed asserts in his reckless fashion that Maitland was bribed to allow Cardinal Beaton to escape from prison in 1543 “But at length by buddis given to the said Lord Seaton and to the old Lord of Lethingtoun, he was restored to St Andrews, from whence he wrought all mischief.” Sadler and Arran must have known

who were implicated; but, though they talked the matter over, Lethington’s name does not occur. “Then he told me,” —Sadler writes, reporting his conversation with the Regent, —“then he told me—swearing a great oath—that the Cardinal’s money had corrupted Lord Seton.”

both factions respected and trusted him; the counsel of the “unspotted and blameless” judge was always in request. James VI. observed, on his retirement from the active duties of the bench, that he had served with unswerving fidelity, “our grandsire, gudsire, grandame, mother, and ourself;” so that Sir Richard must have been in the public service in one capacity or other for upwards of sixty years.

It was a wild and stormy time; and the man who, in high office during sixty of these troubled years, was permitted to lead a simple, studious, tranquil, and, for the most part, uneventful life, must have been exceptionally fortunate, as well as constitutionally prudent. Several months of each year were of course spent in the capital; but Lethington was his favourite residence. He loved the quiet of the country. There he collected his poems; there he planted; there he gardened. The apple still prized as “the Lethington,” was, it is said, introduced by him from abroad. A contemporary poet has painted with cordial sympathy, and no inconsiderable skill, the characteristic attractions of the old keep. Let Virgil praise Mantua, Lucan Corduba; but the excellence of Lethington—its massive tower, its walls exceeding strong—will be *his* theme. He can keep silence no longer; he must “put furth his mind,” as he says, with natural quaint-

ness. How delightful it is to gaze from the wide roof over fair fields and woods; to see Phoebus rise from the Lammermuir, or at nightfall "to hear the bumming of the air and pleasant even's sound!" The arbours, the flower-beds, the orchard green, the "alleys fair, baith braid and lang," which he praises, are still preserved; but the lands have passed away from men of "Maitland blude"; even the historic name has been stupidly and foolishly discarded; and one fears that the bard's inquiry—

"Who does not know the Maitland blude,
The best in all the land;
In whilk some time the honor stude,
And worship of Scotland?"—

would not now receive, even from the dwellers on the soil which Sir Richard owned, any clear or articulate response. It is only a hundred years ago since Pinkerton was able to assure his readers that Barbour's 'Bruce,' Blind Harry's 'Wallace,' and Sir David Lindsay's poems "might be found in modern spelling in almost every cottage in Scotland." I imagine that, out of the libraries of the learned and curious, not half-a-dozen copies could now be produced. The new democracy appear to have absolutely no interest in the story or ballad which was the delight of their fathers and grandfathers. We

have—wisely or unwisely—made a clean sweep of the Past.

A great calamity overtook Sir Richard at a period of his life which cannot now be precisely fixed. We know, however, that before Mary returned to Scotland he was *blind*. The loss of sight to a man of his tastes must have been a severe privation; but he bore the affliction with characteristic calmness and cheerfulness. Fortunately it did not incapacitate him for active life,—he continued to occupy his seat on the bench, which he did not definitely resign, as we have seen, till within a year or two of his death. In the country he must now, however, have been comparatively helpless. Field-sports were out of the question, and even his trees and flowers had possibly ceased to interest him. “I am visited with such infirmity,” he says, in the preface to the ‘History of the Setons,’ “that I am unable to occupy myself as in times past. But to avoid idleness of mind, and because in these days I think it perilous to ‘mell’ with matters of great importance, I have among other labours gathered and collected the things set forth in this little volume.” By “other labours” he probably alludes to what ultimately became his engrossing occupation—the cultivation and collection of verse. The Maitland Manuscripts preserved at Cambridge

are worth far more than their weight in gold—are in fact invaluable; for had they not been preserved, much of the early poetry of Scotland would have been irretrievably lost. Mary Maitland was his favourite amanuensis (she wrote with admirable distinctness and legibility, besides being a bit of a poet herself); and thus—father and daughter seated at the window of the Great Hall which looks out on the Lammerlaw—months, and possibly years, were pleasantly and profitably spent.¹

Sir Richard's own verses—not as poetry indeed, but as records of the time—are interesting and valuable. They confirm the agreeable impression of his character which we otherwise obtain. The writer was not a man of any exceptional insight or brilliancy; but his sincerity, his shrewdness, his fine sense, his good feeling, his homely honesty and rectitude, are disclosed on every page. The passion² of the Reformation

¹ The Scottish Text Society are about to republish the Cambridge MSS. A facsimile of a page from the folio Maitland MS. in the Pepys Collection in Magdalen College will be found in the third volume of the 'Facsimiles of the National Manuscripts of Scotland' (No. XXVI.), which also contains two pages from the quarto MS.

in the beautiful handwriting of Mary Maitland (No. LXXII.)

² The *hysterica passio*, we might say, when such an incident as this was possible: "There chanced a duel, a single combat, betwixt James Hepburn of Moreham and one Burnie a skinner in Edinburgh. They were both slain and buried the morning after. Hepburn

does not appear to have touched him. In a fanatical age he was fair; he was tolerant at a time when toleration was held to be a mark of the beast. A good deal of the liberal spirit which distinguished the son is found in the father. Though latterly a stanch Protestant, he had no patience with the "fleshly gospellaris," as he calls them, who though most godly in words were loose livers, and who, though in all other things they acted "maist wicketlie," yet held themselves to be the true servants of God, because they called the Pope Antichrist, and the Mass idolatry, and ate flesh on Fridays. There is a fine passage in the 'History of the Setons,' where, after recording the benefactions of Jane Hepburn to the church of Seton, he continues: "Peradventure some in these days will think that building of kirks, giving of ornaments thereto, and founding of priests, are superstitious things and maintenance of idolatry, and therefore not worthy to be put in memory. But who will please to read the histories and chronicles of all countries will find the conquest of lands, the moving of wars, and the striking of fields and

alleged and maintained that there was seven sacraments, Birnie would have but two or else he would fight. The other was content with great pro-	testations that he would defend his belief with his sword; and so, with great earnestness they yoked, and thus the question was decided."
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battles most written and treated of,—howbeit the said conquests and doings proceeded of most insatiable greediness, and most cruel tyranny, against all law both of God and man. And since things unlesom as these are written to the commendation of the doers thereof, may I not set forth such works as, through all Christendom, and with all the estates thereof, were held of greatest commendation and most godly? How they pleased God, I refer to Himself who sees the hearts and intentions of all creatures. At the least it shows the liberal and honourable heart of the doers thereof, who would rather spend their geir and goods upon such visible and commendable acts than hoard and poke up the same in coffers, or waste it upon unlawful sensuality or prodigality.”

We are constantly told that the principles of civil and religious liberty were unfamiliar to the men of the sixteenth century, and that toleration, liberty of conscience, freedom of speech and thought, were plants of later growth. But such a passage as this (and there are many similar passages, for instance, in the contemporary letters of William the Silent) seems to show that the idea was not so unfamiliar as it is said to have been, and that the reformers who attached civil and ecclesiastical penalties to “unlicensed thinking” sinned wilfully, and against

the light. And if we are to accept Sir Richard's deliberate judgment—the impressions of a singularly sober and judicial observer—we are tempted to question how far the new order of things, as a reformation of morals, was a real advance upon the old. Much of the literature of the age, at least, seems to support the contention that there was little immediate amendment of life, and that, in some respects indeed, the ultra-Calvinistic revolution did more harm than good. It was natural, of course, that the liberation of the fresh and ardent activities which were everywhere at work should be attended by occasional outbursts of anarchy and licence; and too much validity must not be ascribed to complaints which were perhaps unconsciously exaggerated. The preachers ultimately succeeded in stemming the tide. Open sin as well as innocent gaiety were proscribed; but the Puritan was not victorious for nearly a century; and if Scotland had been content with such “reasonable reformation” as Sir David Lindsay and Sir Richard Maitland advocated, it is possible that his and might have been entirely dispensed with. The religious debauch has been followed—once, and perhaps more than once, in our history—by the inevitable reaction.

Sir Richard's complaints are very specific, and are so far borne out by much contemporary evi-

dence. Where is the blitheness that hath been? he inquires. The popular festivals and merry-makings are forbidden; the old familiar and kindly relations between the laird and his dependants have ceased to exist. Justice cannot be administered; the great men come to the bar with "jak of steel," and overawe the judges. The thieves of Liddesdale are more truculent than ever. Both the temporal and spiritual estates are "soupit in sensualitie"; and, in spite of the pretended reformation, at no former time were vice and crime more prevalent,—pride, envy, dissimulation, on the one hand; theft, slaughter, and oppression of the commons on the other. Ruth and pity are banished. The peasantry had been well treated by the kirkmen; but since the teinds and kirk-lands have been appropriated by lay lords they are utterly wrecked—having been either evicted from their holdings, or ruined by monstrous rents and oppressive services. The commons were profitable to the common-weal; what is to come of the land, he asks, when none are left to defend it? But though the honest hind is ruined, the money which has been wrung from him is recklessly thrown away on unprofitable luxuries. New-fangled fashions are spreading among the wealthy traders. The furred cloaks of the wives and daughters of the citizens are made of the

finest silk—their hats are “cordit” with gold, and “broidered” with golden thread—their shoes and slippers are of velvet.

It may be said that these are the complaints of an aristocratic grumbler, who had no very warm attachment to the new order and the new men; but the language used by the preachers of the Reformed Church themselves was just as vehement. The General Assembly which met at Leith in January 1572—twelve years after the Reformation had been completed—was opened by an address from the Reverend David Ferguson; and it is tolerably obvious, from the unqualified terms in which he denounced the prevailing ungodliness and immorality, that up to that time no amendment had been observed by those most closely interested. “For this day Christ is spoiled among us, while that which ought to maintain the ministry of the Kirk and the poor is given to profane men, flatterers in Court, ruffians and hirelings; the poor in the meantime oppressed with hunger, the kirks and temples decaying for the lack of ministers and upholding, and the schools utterly neglected.” If he had been brought up in Germany, he continues, “where Christ is truly preached, and all things done decently and in order,” and then should have seen “the foul deformity of your kirks and temples, which are more like sheep-

cots than the house of God," he could not have believed that there was "any fear of God or right religion in the most part of this realm." "And as for the ministers of the Word, they are utterly neglected, and come in manifest contempt among you ;—whom ye mock in your mirth and threaten in your anger." This spirited discourse was printed at St Andrews in 1573, and was approved by Knox, who "with my dead hand but glad heart" praised God that "in this desolation" such light was still left in His Church. It is clear, indeed, that Knox himself, in his latter years, was profoundly dissatisfied with the fruits of the Reformation. His influence had declined ; he was very lonely : "Jezebel" had been cast out, and the preachers were victorious ; yet somehow the Church did not thrive.

One of the most interesting of Sir Richard's poems is addressed to his eldest son—"Counsel to my son being in the Court." It was written about 1555,—soon after William Maitland had entered the service of the Queen-Regent. He entreats his son to be neither a flatterer nor a scorner ; but to treat all men with equal courtesy and gentleness. He warns him against "playing at the carts,"—unless, indeed, for pastime or inconsiderable stakes. Though he should rise to the highest place in the government, he is to remember the instability of fortune, and walk

warily. He is not to seek prematurely for advancement; experience steadies the judgment; and it is well not to be over-confident in a world which is as changeable as the moon or the sea. He is to follow a consistent course,—be not blown about, he says emphatically, by “winds of all airs.” And above all he is to be true in thought and deed to the Queen, caring at the same time for the poor man, and maintaining justice and right. One is not quite sure, when reading this poem, how far the old laird understood or appreciated his brilliant son. After the Secretary’s death, Sir Richard wrote to Elizabeth to assure her that he did not approve of all that William Maitland had done. But upon the whole, the relations between father and son, from first to last, appear to have been entirely cordial. There was a good deal, indeed, of the incalculable about the younger man, and Sir Richard may occasionally have felt as the mother hen feels when her duckling takes to the water. This liking for an unfamiliar element is, we may fancy, a constant source of surprise and disquietude to the maternal mind; and Lethington’s brilliant audacities may sometimes have been misinterpreted by his father—as they were by others.

All Sir Richard’s sons were men of extraordinary force of character; even Thomas, who died young and who is remembered mainly as one of

the learned controversialists in Buchanan's celebrated symposium—'De Jure Regni apud Scotos'—must have been a remarkable man. He is the reputed author of a *jeu d'esprit* printed in Calderwood, which for its ironical force and grave simplicity is not unworthy of Swift or Defoe. It professes to report the speeches which were delivered at an informal meeting by the leaders of the extreme party in Church and State on the proposal that Moray should accept the crown. The peculiarities of each of the speakers—Knox, Lindsay, John Wood, James Macgill, and the rest—are hit off with entire fidelity; and the grave tone of an impartial reporter is preserved with whimsical decorum. The preachers were very angry; they denounced the anonymous author and his "forgery," as they called it, with the utmost bitterness; and anxiously assured their people that no such meeting had been held. Irony is the flower (the flower—or weed?) of a later season. The delicate incisiveness and subtle reserve of a weapon that wounds with the stealthy stroke of the stiletto were indifferently appreciated at a time when heads were harder and thicker than they are now, and when good downright abuse—a blow straight from the shoulder such as Knox could deliver—was required to impress an argument on the understanding. The bubbles that float on the surface of a refined and

polished society are common enough among us; Canning, Praed, Disraeli, Thackeray, Aytoun, Martin, have brought the art of blowing them to perfection; but Maitland's political squib was perhaps the first of its kind in Scotland, and deserves recognition accordingly.

Here are a few words from the speech assigned to Knox: "I praise my God greatumlie that hath heard my prayer, which often times I poured forth before the throne of His Majesty, in anguish of my heart; and that hath made His Evangell to be preached with so notable a success under so weak instruments; which indeed could never have been done, except your Grace had been constituted ruler over the Church, especially indued with such a singular and ardent affection to obey the will of God and voice of His ministers. Therefore it seemeth to me necessar, both for the honour of God, the comfort of the poor brethren, and the utility of this commonweal, that first your Grace, next your estate, be preserved in equality of time, and not to prescribe any diet of fifteen or seventeen years, leaning more to the observation of politic laws than the approbation of the eternal God. As I could never away with their jolly wits and politic brains, which my Lord Lindsay calleth Matchiavel's disciples, so should I wish they were out of the way if it were possible. Better

it is to content ourselves with him of whose modesty we have had good experience, both in wealth and trouble, than to change from the gravity of an aged ruler to the intemperancy of an unbridled child. Your Grace hath perceived how the blast of my trumpet against the Regiment of Women is approved of all the godly. I have written in like manner, and have it ready for the printing, a book wherein I prove by sufficient reasons that all kings, princes, and rulers go not by succession; and that birth hath no power to promote, nor bastardy to seclude, men from the government. This will waken others to think more deeply. Besides this, we shall set furth an act in the General Assembly; and both I and the rest of the brethren shall ratify the same in our daily sermons, till that it be more than sufficiently persuaded to the people. This being solemnly done, the book of God opened and laid before the nobility, who will say the contrair, except he that will not fear the weighty hand of the magistrate striking with the sword, and the censure of the Kirk rejecting him, as the scabbed sheep from the rest of the flock, by excommunication?' Then my Lord Regent said: 'Ye know I was never ambitious: yet I will not oppose myself to the will of God, revealed by you who are His true ministers. But, John, hear ye—tell your opinion in the pulpit.'

Which when he had promised to do, the Laird of Pittarow was desired to speak."

The finale as related by Calderwood, is highly characteristic of the manners and customs of a theocratic society: "David Forrest, called the General, gave a copy of it to Alice Sandelands, Lady Ormeston, and affirmed it to be true. She brought it to Mr Knox, and asked if it was true. He answered, 'Ye sall know my answer afterward.' So the next preaching day he rehearsed the contents of it, and declared that the devill, the father of lees, was the chief inventor of that letter, whosoever was the penman, and threatened that the contriver should die in a strange land, where he should not have a friend near him to hold up his head. And as the servant of God denounced, it came to pass; for he departed out of this life in Italy while he was going to Rome."¹

¹ Satirical effusions do not appear to have been in favour with the Presbyterian clergy. Thus we find in the Chronicle of Perth: "Henry Balnaves and William Jack made their repentance in their own seats on Sabbath afternoon, for making libel against Mr William Couper, minister, and Henry Elder, clerk—

As King David was ane sair sanct
to the crown,

So is Mr William Couper and the
clerk to this poor town."

Not content with ecclesiastical censure, an Act of Council was afterwards passed, which declared that neither of them "should bear office or get honorable place in the town thereafter." Considering the strength of their own language, the ministers must have been extraordinarily sensitive

John Maitland, the second son, was born in 1545, so that he was a mere lad when "Lethington" was in the prime of life. He was a fine scholar—some of his Latin epigrams are still preserved; an eminent lawyer, who had acquired wide repute as a jurist before he was raised to the bench; and he was made a judge at three-and-twenty. He lacked the supreme gifts of his elder brother—the flash of genius, the play of wit, the brilliant gaiety; but for sheer force of character he was not a whit his inferior. When he emerged from the long eclipse that followed the fall of Mary's faction in Scotland, he rose with extraordinary rapidity to the highest place in the State. He was the favourite minister of James. The great nobles, the old earls, regarded him with distrust; but, confident in the support of the middle classes and of the Kirk, he successfully defied their hostility. The conflict with Bothwell, the conflict with Mar, were prolonged and obstinate; but, though he met with occasional misadventures, his intrepidity, his political sagacity, his indefatigable industry, made him indispensable to the king, and when he died in his fiftieth year he was still one of the foremost men, if not the foremost man, in Scotland. He was building the great house at Thirlstane when he was suddenly seized with mortal illness; and

his grandson, the famous or infamous Duke, years afterwards, completed the princely house, which a too sanguine architect had left unfinished. He had so far, indeed, outlived his popularity. He had established the Presbyterian form of worship and government in the Church; the Act of 1592, "the charter of the liberties of the Kirk," as it is called, was his work; but he had been concerned in the death of "the bonnie Earl of Moray,"—a crime which, taking hold of the popular imagination, like the death of Darnley, Scotsmen have never ceased to detest. Lord Burleigh said that the Scottish Chancellor was "the wisest man in Scotland;" and the intimate relations—"the old familiar acquaintance and strict amity"—which Sir William Cecil had maintained with Lethington, were renewed with the younger Maitland; but there was a large alloy of baser stuff in his "wisdom"; the ardent Churchman was careless of religion, and the sagacious and patriotic statesman was restrained by no vulgar and inconvenient scruples.

Lord Thirlstane—John Maitland was made a peer before he died—was buried in the Abbey Church of Haddington, where many of the Maitlands lie. On a florid monument of yellow marble in the aisle his virtues were duly commemorated by his august master in even more

florid verse. The monument has been carefully preserved; it is within a few yards of the simple slab which marks the last resting-place of Jane Welsh Carlyle.

On the later fortunes of the Maitlands, as peers of Scotland, it is not here necessary to enlarge. Only once in the years that succeeded did they rise again into distinct historical and national importance. The portly figure of Lauderdale—a grotesque and uncouth, but terribly impressive figure—occupies a large part of the canvas which the painters of the next century devoted to its beauties and to its wits. The apostate Covenanter became the boon companion of Charles, and the contrast between the austere discipline of the conventicle and the gaieties of a voluptuous Court was no doubt keenly relished. The coarse and sensual tastes of the man were not perhaps inbred; the evil grew upon him—as we can partly trace in the portraits that remain; under happier stars, and a better master, the most highly gifted Scotsman of the time might have been worthily and profitably employed. But the infamy which, in the judgment of his countrymen, attaches to that sinister career, is not now likely to be relieved by any touch of brightness which the closest scrutiny (and five-and-twenty volumes of unexplored Lauderdale manuscripts

repose in the British Museum) can throw upon it.¹

Of the earlier life of William Maitland, little, indeed nothing, with certainty is known. I am, for various reasons, inclined to believe that he was born about the year 1528,—it is probable that his brother John, the Chancellor of James VI., was not born before 1545; and John was one of the younger members of a family which, as I have said, consisted of three sons and four daughters.² William was little more than a boy when, following the fashion of the time, he went to St Andrews, and he probably completed his education abroad. The close connection between Scotland and France was still maintained, and the sons of the Scottish gentry were well received by the polished society of a capital where Marie of Lorraine had been a familiar figure, and where her daughter, the little Queen of Scots, with her band of maiden “Maries,” and the fair scholars of the cloister, now held a mimic Court. It is obvious from his correspondence that Maitland had been highly educated; the incidental allusions, the classical innuendoes, the

¹ Selections from these papers are being published by the Camden Society.

² Pinkerton says John was born about 1537; but he was

only fifty when he died in 1595. The date commonly assigned is 1545, and this agrees with the inscription on his monument.

bright byplay in his letters, are characteristic of a man of graceful and scholarly accomplishment. He was not, perhaps, a profound or laborious student; but for a man of action, for a man of the world, his store of poetry and philosophy was by no means contemptible, and he could use it on occasion with characteristic promptitude and adroitness. The erudite Elizabeth declared that Lethington was "the flower of the wits of Scotland;" in many a sharp debate, in many a Biblical controversy, Knox found him no mean antagonist. Yet it is certain that he was an even better judge of men than of books. Than the young Scotsman, who in his thirtieth year became a Minister of State, no keener critic of the follies and foibles of the world, of human nature in its strength and in its weakness, was then living.

CHAPTER TWO.

THE SCOTLAND OF MARY STUART.

THE stranger who from the summit of Blackford Hill gazes across green strath and winding river and autumn-tinted woods to the distant Ben Lomond and Ben Ledi, is astonished by the wonderful variety and beauty of the landscape. No fairer scene had Marmion surveyed; (the magic light of an incomparable imagination falls here as elsewhere!) and many who have gone further afield than Marmion are ready to admit that it is not easily rivalled. The capital itself and its immediate surroundings can be studied to better advantage from this than from any other coign of vantage in the neighbourhood. Arthur's Seat, with the long buttress of Salisbury Crag, stands directly before us. A mile or so to the west the Castle crowns the rocky ridge which rises from Holyrood to St Giles', and on which Old Edinburgh was built. Beyond the spires of church and citadel stretch

the blue waters of the Forth and the low shores of Fife. In the mid distance lies the rocky island of Inchkeith; and with a field-glass the masts of the merchant navy riding in the roads of Leith (where Winter's fleet lay during the famous siege) may be singled out—one by one. The level plain between us and the city—the arena, as it were, of a spacious amphitheatre—is surrounded on every side by eminences more or less commanding,—the Castle Rock, the Calton Hill, Arthur's Seat, the heights of Blackford, Craiglockhart, and Corstorphine. Directly behind us lies the deep glen of the Hermitage, with its rich sweep of autumnal woods; while still further to the south the graceful line of the Pentlands rises sharply and picturesquely above the pastoral hills of Braid.

It is not less than three miles from Blackford to the Castle Hill; but the whole intervening space has now been built over,—much of it within the memory of middle-aged men. The squalid and densely populated “closes” that surround the Grassmarket and the Greyfriars are succeeded by stately crescents and spacious squares, and these again by the sumptuous villas of the lawyers and merchants of the prosperous capital of the north.

The Edinburgh that Lethington knew as a lad

—the Edinburgh of 1545 or of 1550—was contracted within narrow limits. It occupied the back of the ridge between the Castle and Holyrood, or to speak more correctly, between the Castle and the Netherbow; for at that time the Canongate, which continued the High Street to the palace of Mary Stuart, formed a separate burgh. On the north no fortified line of wall was needed—the deep dip into the Nor' Loch being sufficient protection for the lofty buildings which were there crowded along the brink of a wellnigh impassable ravine.

Outside the city wall to the south, there was little building of any kind. The district was sparsely peopled. There were one or two chapels or religious houses; some sort of provisional shelter on the Boroughmuir for those smitten by leprosy or the plague; a hamlet of rustics beside St Roque; the strong castle of the Napiers of Merchiston, and the mansion of the Lairds of Braid. A dense forest of oak had at one time clothed the gentle slopes that lie between Merchiston and the Pentlands; “a field spacious and delightful by the shade of many stately and aged oaks;” but the forest had been gradually thinned out; much of the timber had been used for the construction of booths and galleries in the city; and the wild creatures

who had haunted the sylvan glades of Blackford and Braid had been driven back upon the valley of the Tweed and the moors and marshes of the Upper Ward.

The French called the city Lislebourg — a name which now seems hardly appropriate. In the sixteenth century, however, Edinburgh was nearly surrounded by water. The Nor' Loch and the marshes of the Boroughmuir have been drained; but the picturesque slopes of Arthur's Seat still rise from the reedy margin of lakes where the ousel and the moor-hen breed.

The edge of the ridge on which the buildings of Old Edinburgh were piled is nowhere more than a few yards wide. The main thoroughfare occupied this narrow *arête*. The steep and often precipitous "closes" which join the High Street and Canongate at right angles, and constitute the most notable feature of the old town, take their character from the lie of the ground which they occupy. They form a series of stairs or ladders, on either side of the ridge, leading straight from the level and open country below to the central thoroughfare. In this main thoroughfare the whole public life of the city was concentrated. Here was the great Collegiate Church of St Giles' — here the market-places (the Tron and the butter Tron), the Cross, the Parliament House, the Courts of Justice, the

dwelling of the great nobles and lawyers and merchants and ecclesiastics.¹ The population of the capital at this time did not amount to more than forty thousand souls; but it was crowded into a space where at the present day it would be difficult to accommodate one-half the number. The whole length of the High Street from the Castle to the Tron is only eight hundred yards; from the Castle to Holyrood not more than fourteen hundred. The capital was thus as populous as an ant-hill; and from morning to night the main street at least must have presented a busy and stirring scene—a scene which no doubt reminded the Flemish trader of the turbulent burgher life of the great cities of his native land—of Ghent and Antwerp and Bruges. Much of the business was transacted in the open air; the “closes,” each shut off by its gate from the High Street, were so narrow that neighbours sitting at door or window could converse across the footpath. The ferment of this excited and animated life, favourable as it was to the growth of a somewhat turbulent democratic sentiment, must have been highly contagious. Priests and nobles and tradesmen and caddies jostled one

¹ The High Street, however, even at this time, had been mainly appropriated by the trading community—the great nobles and ecclesiastics having already retreated to the aristocratic “closes.”

another on the "causey." They met in the great cathedral at the solemn functions of the Church; they bartered and trafficked in the roadway; the women sat and gossiped on the outside stairs of the houses, or along the open galleries; no criminal was taken to the Tolbooth or hanged at the Cross, no troop of retainers wearing the livery of Douglas or Hamilton entered the gates, no sermon was preached in St Giles' or speech made to the Parliament, without the whole community being forthwith apprised of what had taken place. The "rascal multitude" of the capital was alternately abused by courtly Churchman and uncourtly Reformer; and the impulsiveness which led them to side now with the one faction and now with the other, was no doubt due to the feverish conditions of the life they led. Brought daily together into intimate contact, each craftsman was known by headmark to every other. All public acts, all political and municipal duties, were transacted under a fierce blaze of light, which excited and stimulated the entire society. Thus it came about that at not unfrequent intervals, when heated by zeal or blinded by panic, they sallied out, master and man, like a swarm of angry bees.¹

¹ Taylor, the Water Poet, who was in Scotland some fifty years after the period of which I am writing, gives a graphic picture of the capital as it was in the beginning of the next

Of this stirring and crowded life, and of the influence it exercised on the nation at large, I shall have occasion to speak hereafter; in the meantime we must try to realise with some distinctness the condition of provincial Scotland, the Scotland that lay outside the walls of the capital, about the time when William Maitland left the family nest to try his fortune at Court. The country everywhere was thinly peopled; the whole population in the middle of the sixteenth century did not probably exceed six hundred thousand souls. The estimate is approximate only; there are no statistics which can be implicitly trusted. For a nation which was forced to play a great part in the Euro-

century :—" Leaving the castle, I descended lower to the city, wherein I observed the fairest and goodliest street — one-half an English mile from the Castle to a faire port which they called the Netherbow, and from that port the street which they call the Kenny-gate is one quarter of a mile more, down to the King's Palace, called Holy-rood-house; the buildings on each side of the way being all of squared stone, five, six, and seven stories high, and many by-lanes and closes on each side of the way, wherein are gentlemen's houses, much fairer than

the buildings in the high street, for in the high street the marchants and tradesmen do dwell, but the gentlemen's mansions and goodliest houses are obscurely founded in the afore-said lanes, the walls are eight or ten foote thick, exceeding strong, not built for a day or a week or a month or a year; but from antiquity to posterity for many ages."—[Since this chapter was in type, some interesting information on the topography of Old Edinburgh, by Professor David Masson, has appeared in the 'Scotsman' newspaper]

pean politics of the age, the number seems to us insignificant; but, with our "teeming millions," we are apt to forget that the influence of a nation does not necessarily depend on its numerical superiority. Athens, in her prime, had only three hundred and fifty thousand citizens; the population of Judea did not exceed a million and a quarter. Before the war of the Succession, which placed Robert Bruce on the throne, the population of Scotland had probably been as great as it was in the beginning of Mary's reign; but three centuries of bloody wars and disastrous feuds had effectually arrested the natural growth. During the forty years of comparative tranquillity which followed there was a rapid rise. Because of the long truce, as Buchanan observes of an earlier pause in the slaughter, "there were more young men in the country." When James VI. ascended the English throne in 1603, his Scottish subjects numbered about a million.

It is difficult to believe that the ruler of this handful of people could on occasion bring twenty or thirty or forty thousand men into the field. The number of Scotsmen who fought at Flodden has been possibly overstated by our earlier writers; yet there seems no good reason to doubt that at least thirty thousand men-at-arms were gathered upon the Boroughmuir.

But when we remember that every man and boy between sixteen and sixty years of age was liable to serve, the difficulty is to some extent removed. The population of Scotland according to the census of 1881, slightly exceeded three millions and a half. Of this number nearly one million males were between the ages of sixteen and sixty. Assuming that the population is now six times greater than it was in the reign of James IV., and that the proportion of available males to the whole population remains about the same, there must have been in 1513 considerably upwards of one hundred thousand men capable of bearing arms. On a grave national emergency, and when the great nobles were cordially united, it is quite possible that at least a third of this number—thirty or forty thousand more or less disciplined retainers—may have followed the king to the field.

From the point of view of the social and political observer, the people of Scotland during the sixteenth century might have been roughly classified as Borderers, Lowlanders, and Celts,—the inhabitants of the Border dales, of the Lowland counties along the eastern seaboard, and of the wild and mountainous districts, Highland and Island, lying behind the chain of the Grampians. In constructing a picture of the Scotland of Mary Stuart these broad lines of demarca-

tion must be habitually recognised. Impassable marshes where the bittern and bustard lodged; broad meres haunted by water-fowl; masses of primeval forest from which the wild creatures of the chase—the wolf, the boar, the red-deer—had not yet been driven; a scanty strip of arable land round the unfrequent hamlet, and a considerable breadth of pastoral country, rising through meadow-grass and bent and heather, to the stony infertility of the surrounding mountains; the splendid and imposing houses of the religious orders, the fortified castles of the nobles, the wretched cabins of the peasantry; these were common to each. But while among the wilds of Liddesdale and Badenoch the people were in a very rudimentary stage of civilisation, were not yet weaned from the savage ways of their ancestors, Fife and the Lothians were comparatively settled. “Fife and the Lothians” is a convenient colloquial expression much in use at the time; but “Fife and the Lothians” really represented a much wider territorial area—an area extending on the one hand to Glasgow, and on the other to Elgin or Aberdeen. Trade, agriculture, commerce—historical, ecclesiastical, and legal culture—the amenities of social and domestic life—the political forces which determine the form of government,—were to be found there, and there only. The capital, the univer-

sity towns, the rising burghs, the thriving seaports, were included in the "inland counties," from which the outlaws of Athol and Badenoch and the broken men of the Border—"stark mosstroopers, and arrant thieves"—were excluded by Act of Parliament.¹

Of the outlying districts, the Border country was most intimately associated with the general history of the time, and exercised the most direct influence upon the course of events.

The rain-cloud that sweeps the sides of Ettrick Pen helps to fill the Tweed, the Annan, and the Esk; and the configuration of the Border dales will be best understood if we take our stand on one or other of the peaks of the range of which Ettrick Pen is probably the true summit. To

¹ Marie of Lorraine, the Queen of James V., landing at Fife Ness, rode to St Andrews, where she was met by the bridegroom. "When the Queen came to her palace, and met with the King, she confessed unto him, she never saw in France, nor no other country, so many goodly faces in so little room, as she saw that day in Scotland: For she said it was shown unto her in France, that Scotland was but a barbarous country, destitute and void of all good

commodities that used to be in other countries; but now she confessed she saw the contrary: For she never saw so many fair personages of men, women, young babes, and children, as she saw that day." There may have been a touch of flattery in this speech; but other travellers were struck in the same way, and the "East Neuk of Fife" was probably in the reign of James V. the most settled and progressive district in Scotland.

the north and north-east we have the valley of the Tweed, to the south and south-west the valleys of the Esk and the Annan. The Tweed falls into the German Ocean; the Esk and Annan into the Solway. The tributary valleys of the Tweed are those through which the Ettrick, the Yarrow, the Leader, and the Teviot flow. All these, except the Leader, descend from the hill-country which lies to the south; the Leader alone, issuing from the Lammermuirs, belongs to the north. Speaking generally, it may be said that the basin of the Tweed comprehends the whole of the fertile strath that lies between the Lammermuir and the Cheviots. Melrose, Dryburgh, Roxburgh, Kelso are built on the banks of the main stream; Branxholm stands on the Teviot; Ferniehurst on the Jed. This is the Scott and Ker country,—the Lords of Buccleuch and the Kers of Ferniehurst and Cessford. Crossing the hillside above Branxholm we reach the system of valleys whose combined waters ultimately form the Esk—Eskdale, Ewesdale, Wauchopdale, and Liddesdale. Dwelling close to the Border among wellnigh inaccessible marshes (the Debateable Land of Canonbie, Morton, and Kirkandrews, the cause of constant strife), the men of these dales—Armstrongs, Elliots, Grahams, and Littles—were exceptionally turbulent and troublesome.

The "thieves of Liddesdale" had an ill repute, and defied with impunity the Scottish and English Wardens. "The Armstrongs of Liddesdale," Magnus wrote in 1526, "had reported presumptuously that they would not be ordered, neither by the King of Scots, their sovereign lord, nor by the King of England, but after such manner as their fathers had used before them." Hermitage Castle was the only considerable place in these remote and lawless valleys. Built by Nicolas de Soulis, it had afterwards come to be a stronghold of the Douglas. On the overthrow of the great house, the Hepburns of Hailes appear to have assumed, by a rather loose kind of hereditary title, the Wardenship of the Middle Marches, and Hermitage passed into their hands. Annandale is the last of the true Border dales; for Nithsdale, which is sometimes classed along with them, is separated from England by the broad waters of the Solway. The "great names" in these western valleys were Jardine, Johnstone, and Maxwell. The dales must at that time have been populous,—on a week's notice seven thousand men could be raised in Nithsdale, Annandale, and Liddesdale alone.

The fighting men of the Border were all mounted. As light irregular cavalry, as scouts in a difficult country, their services to a more

organised force were often invaluable. The Border nags were slight, but wiry and indefatigable, and perfectly suited for Border travel and Border warfare. They could pick their way with admirable sagacity along the narrow and slippery tracks that crossed the quaking mosses of Tynedale or Tarras; they could clamber like goats across a mountain-pass or up the bed of a torrent; in the darkest night, through the wildest storm, the natural wariness which they shared with the fox and the fowmart could be implicitly trusted. The man who had lost his arm was not more helpless than the Borderer who had lost his horse. On the other hand, when man and horse were well mated, the mosstrooper was a formidable foe. In his steel bonnet and leather jacket, "dagg" or "hackbut" at his saddle-bow, and a Jedburgh stave or jack-spear ready to his hand, he could ride forty miles between dusk and dawn, and then swoop like a hawk upon a hostile clan or the "auld enemy" of England. They were not gipsies; they clung with persistent fidelity each man to the dale where he was born; but the life, if not nomadic, had no element of stability or permanence. The beacon-fires which sent the news of a raid from peel to peel were constantly blazing. By the time the slogan of the freebooters was heard, the cabins had been unroofed

and dismantled, the women and children, the sheep and cattle, had been huddled within the thick walls of the neighbouring castle, and the men had ridden off through moor and moss to rally the outlying retainers of their chief. *Reparabit cornua Phæbe* was the motto of the Scotts of Harden. It might have been adopted by the Border men in general. They were, in Falstaff's phrase, "Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon." Passionately fond of the chase, the "mysteries of woods and forests" appealed to the imagination of the Borderer with peculiar force. But the moonlight ride across the hills, with the prospect of a sharp skirmish and a rich haul of "nolt" and nags on the other side of the water, was a still finer joy. It was a cruel, lawless, and anarchic society; yet it had at the same time some of the virtues which a more polished community is apt to lose. The Red Indian is a Red Indian to the end; but the Border blood was good. Though entirely illiterate, the Dalesmen were not devoid of imagination. The plaintive wail of the Border ballad, the echo of an earlier minstrelsy, has still to a Scottish ear a charm of its own. They were brave and fearless; devout after a fashion; bribe or menace could not shake their fidelity. The unwritten laws of Border honour were inflexibly maintained by thieves and outlaws. A traitor

coming among them fared badly. He was a marked man, and had short shrift. The Judas who betrayed the fugitive Northumberland was never forgiven. "To take Hector's cloak" became a proverbial term of reproach.

About the time of Hector's treachery one of Cecil's emissaries made his way into Teviotdale, where the Earl of Westmorland was in hiding amongst the Kers. Constable was an abominable scoundrel; but his narrative is bright and animated. The devil quotes Scripture, we are told; and the familiar letters of Elizabeth's ministers, in which, while invoking the countenance of the Almighty in language borrowed from the Psalms and the Prophets, the basest intrigues are unblushingly disclosed and discussed, simply amazes us. The obliquity of the puritanic conscience, the deadness of the moral sense in profoundly moral men, is an almost unaccountable phenomenon;—we can have no doubt of the sincerity of their religious zeal, and yet they lied like troopers. What is the explanation? Constable had a keen perception of the infamy of his mission; yet Cecil himself could not have applied the salve of the public well-being to his conscience with more unctuous adroitness. He sincerely trusts that Elizabeth will be merciful; for he could never forgive himself if his victims were brought to the block.

“If it should turn to the effusion of their blood, my conscience would be troubled all the days of my life.” His guides, though thieves and outlaws, were quite incorruptible; his own mission, he admits, was intrinsically base. “This be a traitorous kind of service that I am wayded in, to trap them that trusted me, as Judas did Christ.” The men he was bribed to betray were his own kith and kin, old friends and neighbours; and he praises Lady Westmorland—against whose husband’s life he was plotting—with affectionate if discriminating enthusiasm,—“a faithful servant of God; a dutiful subject to the Queen’s Majesty; an obedient, careful, loving wife to her husband, and of a ripeness of wit, readiness of memory, and plain and pithy utterance of her words. I have talked with many, but never with her like.”¹ One is glad to know that the fugitives escaped, and that his own experiences were not altogether pleasant. “I came furth of Scotland on Sunday, the extremest day for wind and snow that ever I rode in;” “I dare not ride over the fells without more company, for I was in great peril meeting a company of Scots thieves on Thursday at night last.” But, as I have said, the fellow wrote

¹ Lady Westmorland was | Earl of Surrey, and sister of the
Anne Howard, daughter of the | Duke of Norfolk.

admirably, and no livelier picture of the interior of a Border peel has been preserved.

“So I left Ferniehurst and went to my host’s house, where I found many guests of divers factions, some outlaws of England, some of Scotland, some neighbours thereabouts, at cards; some for placks and hardheads; and after that I had diligently learned and inquired that there was none of my surname that had me in deadly feud, nor none that knew me, I sat down and played for hardheads amongst them, where I heard *vox populi* that the Lord Regent would not for his own honour, nor for honour of his country, deliver the Earls, if he had them both, unless it were to have their Queen delivered to him; and if he would agree to make that exchange, the Borderers would start up in his contrary, and reive both the Queen and the Lords from him, for the like shame was never before done in Scotland, and that he durst better eat his own ‘lugs’ than come again to seek Ferniehurst; if he did, he should be fought with ere he came over Soutra Edge. Hector of Harlow’s head was wished to have been eaten amongst us at supper.”¹

¹ Æneas Sylvius, one of the Piccolomini, afterwards Pius II., who was in Scotland in 1413, found the Borderers, lay and clerical, much inclined to

convivialty. At a merry meeting in a priest’s house on the English side of the Border, which had been prolonged into the small hours, there was an

George Buchanan was a native of the Lennox—from the hamlet of Moss near Killearn, where he was born, the mountains round Loch Lomond are plainly visible—and his notices of the neighbouring highlands and islands, with which he was familiar, are lively and valuable. From Buchanan (from Buchanan supplemented by Leslie, Monro, and other contemporary writers) a sufficiently accurate picture of the Celtic mountaineer of Mary's reign may be obtained. In the earliest Scottish maps the "Mounth" is the dividing line between Highland and Lowland; and the "Mounth" is an extension of the Grampian chain, stretching from the Dee on the one side of the island to the Linnhe Loch on the other. "Le Mounth ubi est pessimum passagium sine cibo,"—is an entry that indicates with perfect exactness the feelings about the mountain-barrier, and the country behind it, which was then common in the "inland counties." Mary went to Inverness by the level road along the east coast; yet of that holiday ride Randolph, who accompanied her, wrote: "From Stirling she taketh her journey as far north as Inverness—a terrible journey both for horse and man, the countries are so poor and the

alarm after midnight that the Scotch mosstroopers were near at hand,—whereupon the jovial	company broke up, and took refuge without delay in the neighbouring "peel."
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victuals so scarce. It is thought that it will be a journey for her of two months and more." The confused chaos of hill and valley lying along the "Deucaledonian Sea," which occupies an uncertain space in the older maps, is described by their authors as the favourite haunt of shy and savage creatures which elsewhere were gradually disappearing. "*Hic maxima venatio.*" "*Hic habundant lupi.*" It was the country of the red-deer and the wolf; in a still earlier age, of the wild boar and the beaver. Robbers were numerous upon the land, pirates upon the water; yet even along that remote and dangerous coast peaceful industries had begun to establish themselves.

Buchanan's survey takes us along the coast-line from Ailsa Craig to the Shetland Islands. Kyle and Galloway, he tells us, were richer in flocks than in corn. The people salted and ate the eels which were caught in all the lochs in vast numbers—a curious fact; for though still a favourite fish in England, the lower classes in Scotland would now as soon think of eating an adder or a toad as an eel. The light and sandy soil round Ayr was better fitted to produce brave men than corn and cattle; but the town itself was already a thriving seaport. The lofty Ailsa in the offing, then as now tenanted by multitudes of solan-geese, but inaccessible to

man except by a single dangerous footpath, was resorted to during the summer season while the cod-fishing lasted by immense numbers of small craft. To avoid the risk of rounding the Mull, the seamen entering or quitting the estuary dragged their light vessels across the isthmus at Knapdale. Jura was finely wooded, and abounded in deer; and lead was obtained in the rich and fruitful Islay. The tombs of the kings of Scotland, Ireland, and Norway could still be seen at Iona. Multitudes of sea-fowl were taken in Rum, Tiree, and the remoter islands; in Colonsay the rare eider bred; and herds of seals sunned themselves upon every sandy beach. At Vaterza large numbers of fishermen assembled at certain seasons; Barra was already noted for its cod-fishery; and Skye, where corn, black cattle, and herds of mares abounded, was famous for its herring and its salmon. Seals, sea-fowl, and dried mutton were paid as rent by the tenants. At a time when kings and queens and great nobles were passionately fond of hawking, the trees and rocks where the falcons bred were jealously preserved; yet what trade there was with the outside world consisted mainly of fish. The peaceful merchant trading among the islands was exposed indeed to no inconsiderable risks. The western seas, wild and stormy at all times, were then infested by piratical craft. In the

wooded island of Rona was a deep inlet "where pirates lurked." In Uist were numerous caves covered with heath—"the lurking-places of robbers." On an island opposite Loch Broom the Celtic freebooters lay in the sheltered bays, and "kept watch for travellers;" while South Gruinart—one of the most romantic and charming districts on the mainland—was then, in Buchanan's words, "darkened with gloomy woods and infested with notorious robbers." The northern islanders, the Orcadians and Shetlanders, had little intercourse with Scotland, and traded chiefly with Norway. They bought their boats from the Norwegian ship-builders, and sent them in exchange oil, butter, fish, and a coarse thick cloth, which the women wove. They were remarkably healthy, and lived to a great age. One of them who died quite lately, Buchanan adds, married a wife when he was one hundred years old; and in his hundred and fortieth year was so hale and vigorous that in his frail skiff he would brave alone the roughest seas.

Leslie's description is substantially to the same effect; but it contains some additional touches. The more distant parts of the island are horrible, he admits, by reason of the Grampian mountains, and "other rough, sharp, and hard hills, full of moss, moor, and morass." Yet there are,

even beyond the "Mounth," some favoured spots—such as Lochaber, of which, indeed, Buchanan had declared that it was "delightful from its shady groves, and pleasant rivulets and fountains." At the time when the Bishop wrote, Loch Broom had become the central station for the herring-fishing on the west coast; it was "copious in herring miraculously," and was resorted to not only by Scotch fishermen, but by the English, the French, and the Flemings. A species of goat found on the island of Hirta, was remarkable for its size and its magnificent horns. Capercailzie, falcons, eagles, grouse, black-cock, bustards, and six kinds of geese, are among the wild-fowl enumerated by Leslie. Of the wild goose, he says, there is a marvellous multitude in the west isles, where they are captured in nets, and domesticated by the natives. Wild swans do not seem to have been so numerous on that side of the island; the Loch of Spynie and other inland waters on the east coast having been then, as they are still, among their favourite haunts. The Orkney Islanders traded with Holland as well as with Scandinavia—whale-oil being the chief commodity which they exported. Their horses were very small, but in labour marvellously durable; and food was so cheap among them, that a hundred eggs could be bought for a French sous of Tours.

“And that none think that I speak sophistically, those eggs of which I speak are hens’ eggs, and new and fresh; and again, that I be not thought to speak hyperbolically or above my bounds, I say less (they shall understand) than the truth is.”

The pirates and robbers, “the wicked thieves and hammers,” “the strange beggars resorting in great numbers out of the Highlands,” against whom many old statutes were directed, were outside the pale of Lowland charity; but of the people “we call Redshanks,” who occupy “the mair horrible places of the realm,” both Buchanan and the Bishop speak in eulogistic terms. They are not blind to their faults, indeed; some of which, it is to be feared, the Celt has not yet unlearned or outgrown. Leslie, for instance, complains that “not karing as it war for the morn,” they catch only as many fish as will serve for immediate use—leaving the more lucrative deep-sea trade to be prosecuted by others. But the simple, abstemious, hardy life led by the mountaineers, is cordially praised. They could go all day without food—eating only in the early morning and at night. Hunting and fishing supplied them with what food they needed. They flayed the deer where it fell, and the skin filled with water served as a vessel in which to boil the flesh. They naturally de-

lighted in blue and purple and other brilliant colours; but their plaids and kilts were of a plain dark brown—a colour so like the heather among which they lurked, that it failed to attract the eye. Wrapped in their plaids, they braved the severest storms in the open air—sleeping sometimes even among the snow. Their beds were composed of fern or heather; when they travelled abroad they threw aside the pillow and blanket with which they were supplied by their hosts, lest they might grow effeminate like their Lowland neighbours.¹ They wore an iron head-piece, and a coat of mail made of loose iron rings, very light and flexible,—“harnest with jacks all woven through with iron hooks”—as Leslie vividly describes it. The bow was their favourite weapon (it was retained, indeed, by the hill-poacher till about the end of last century; and among the braes of Rannoch many an antlered stag fell to the eagle-feathered arrow

¹ Some of whom seem actually to have enjoyed the luxury of a feather-bed. At least in the inventory of Archbishop Beaton's effects (in his action against Mure of Caldwell), “23 fedder beds” are included. The value put upon them is rather suggestive of ranty,—they were luxuries which, like the glass windows at Alnwick, were laid

away very carefully when the owner left. “It were good,” the steward says in his report on Alnwick Castle for the year 1567, “that the whole lights of every window, at the departure of his lordship, and during the time of his lordship's absence, were taken down and laid up in safety, until his return they be set up anew.”

of Ewen M'Ewen within the memory of people who were living the other day), though some carried swords, and others Lochaber-axes. The Highland Celts, like the Dalesmen, were passionately fond of music. They played on bagpipe and harp—the harps of the greater bards being richly decorated with silver and precious stones. The praise of brave men and brave deeds was the subject of their songs, which, Buchanan observes, were “not inelegant.” The caustic Dunbar, on the other hand, was very hard upon the Celtic minstrels.—

“The Devil sae devt was with their yell,
That in the deepest pot of hell,
He smont them with smoke.”¹

The Catholic bishop naturally commends the constancy of the Celt to the Catholic faith. The Borderers, who long resisted the preachers (Norfolk says significantly that the Humes and the Kers sided with the Congregation for the expulsion of the French, but were not inclined to them in matters of religion), were won over at last; but the new doctrines failed to cross

¹ The serenade of bagpipes to which Mary was treated on her arrival at Holyrood is noticed by Brantome. “He ! quelle musique ! et quel repos pour sa nuit !” “She was so well pleased with the melody,” Calderwood observes, “that she

willed the same to be continued some nights after” I suspect it was to the same favourite musical instrument that Froissart alludes—“it seemed as if all the devils of hell had been there.”

the mountain-barrier, and in Highland glen and western island the people continued to worship as their fathers worshipped before the days of Knox. Amongst the Redshanks—he continues—is continual battle. The greater of degree and the nobler of blood is in the war the foremost. Their prince or captain they hold in such reverence, that for his cause or at his command they will venture their own life, be the danger or death never so bitter. If at any time they are free from war, they spend it not in idleness or vanity or auld wives' fables, but in making the limbs of their bodies more firm and fit by running, fencing, and wrestling. Even the wild beasts of the forest they run down on foot. No men thus are less delicate than the Redshanks, or less given to voluptuous and fleshly pleasures. And in the same manner of way they bring up their "bairns"—in shooting of arrows, in feeding of horses, in casting darts, in hearing of the men of renown in whose footsteps they are to tread.¹

So much for the Redshank of Mary's reign. It was a hard life that he led; according to modern standards he was little better than a

¹ Condensed from Leslie. The amusing translation into the vernacular by Father James Dalrymple, has been recently edited for the Scottish Text Society by Father E. G. Cody. The Western Islands were visited by Dean Monro, who describes the tombs of the Kings at Iona, in the year 1549.

savage; and the modern historian waxes merry at his expense. A paradoxical Froude or a quixotic Ruskin may possibly be inclined to maintain, indeed, that the education which makes men simple, hardy, brave, and frugal is not to be despised. How many a scholar from Eton or Oxford could spend the winter night among the heather—a mouthful of oat-cake for supper, a “green turf” for a pillow, the North Star straight overhead—and rise at daybreak with the moorcock and the whaup?

When we descend from Border peel and High-land clachan to the low countries lying mainly along the eastern seaboard, we come among a people who, in spite of domestic feuds and the weakness of the central government, are comparatively peaceful and civilised. Except when civil war was actually raging, the itinerant “chapman” might carry his pack from Glasgow to Edinburgh, from Edinburgh to St Andrews and Perth and Aberdeen, without much risk. There was no general or organised police force to render life and property secure; but, continual anarchy being insupportable, an implicit understanding existed among the greater barons that each within his own territory would be responsible for the maintenance of some degree of order. The extensive woods,

which at an earlier period had covered the country, had been destroyed. Only a fragment of the *Silva Caledonia* remained. Timber was scarce, and in those districts where peat could not be obtained, the people were badly off for fuel. But the removal of almost impassable thickets had been attended with one advantage: the outlaw—the robber and the assassin—was deprived of a secure retreat. He could no longer shelter himself in the gloomy and inaccessible depths of a forest which stretched from Loch Awe to the Border. Other savage creatures, too, were scared away. The red-deer could still roam across the heather; but when the forest fell before fire or axe, the wolf was fain to retreat to Badenoch or Lochaber.

When these changes came about it is difficult exactly to determine. In the country of Buchan, which, before the breaking out of the English wars, was densely wooded, no tree will grow. The oaks which are dug out of the mosses bear upon them the marks of fire; and the popular fancy in consequence attributes their destruction to some great social convulsion—possibly the “harrying” of the district by Robert or Edward Bruce. We know that the contemporary earl petitioned Edward I. to grant him *maremium*, in consideration of the losses he had sustained by the war. Edward acceded to the request,

and allowed him fifty oaks yearly out of the royal forests "in Buchan and Kintore." From this it would appear that the then earl—one of the great house of Comyn—had been attacked, and his district "harried," some time before the final defeat on Aiky Brae sent him an exile to the English Court. The abundance of the bog-oak in countries where, through "the penurie of wood," the people burnt peat alone, astonished the writers of the time. "But how has such great and wide woods ever there grown, where now by no art or craft of man, will not so much as ane small wand grow (the ground is so barren), we cannot marvel enough." One considerable calamity, indeed, is probably connected with the ruin of the forest that stretched along the eastern seaboard. Large tracts of arable and pasture land which the wood protected are now covered with *sand*. The whole parish of Forvie, burgh and landward, has been "ouircassen." The vast sand-hills of Foveran, over which one can tramp for hours, were, we are told, "formerly flowery meadows." A delightful naturalist, who died only the other day, has described, with singular vividness, the barren bents between Spey and Findhorn; these barren bents were once the most fertile lands in Moray. The light flakes have drifted across the chapel of Pittulie, the tower of Rattray, the church at

Cruden, which was built by King Malcolm in memory of the nobles who fell in his last battle with the Danes. "The kirk that was biggit to this effect," Bellenden says, "as afttimes occuris in thay partis, was ouircassen by violent blasts of sandis." The mischief became so threatening, that in the next century the Scottish Parliament, "considering that many lands, meadows, and pasturages lying on the sea-coasts have been ruined and overspread in many places of this kingdom," punished with fine and imprisonment the offence of pulling up by the root the bent or bushes of juniper that gave solidity to the shifting soil. It was probably the fringe of low and fertile land along the shore that was first brought into cultivation, and which at one time had been most densely peopled; and the great sand-banks of Moray and Aberdeenshire may thus preserve—unhappily beyond reach of the most congenial Dryasdust—some unique records of a perished society.

There can, I think, be little doubt that whatever was best and worthiest in Scottish life for several hundred years, was to be found in one form or other in connection with the great religious houses—the abbeys and monasteries—which were planted in nearly every district, however remote and however inaccessible. The missionary genius of the Catholic Church had

been stronger than stormy strait, or rugged mountain, or inclement sky. The massive strongly fortified square towers, with their picturesque roofs and gables, and turrets and bastions, which rose darkly against wood and hill from every coign of vantage, might more readily attract the eye; yet it was not in the noble's castle, but in the monastic buildings lying along the river-bank in the sheltered valley below, that the sacred flame of liberal culture, of polite learning, of a humane civilisation, was encouraged to burn. The Abbey Church of Haddington was emphatically "the Lamp of Lothian": and from age to age, from Kirkwall to the Border, such lamps had been lit. The moral, spiritual, intellectual illumination of the people—what of it there might be—came from them. That the religious orders increased and multiplied inordinately, need not be denied; and it is plain that immediately before the Reformation (although the evils have been grossly exaggerated) there was much idleness and much corruption among the higher clergy. But within the precincts of each of the wealthier abbeys an active industrial community (whose influence had been so far entirely beneficial) was housed. The prescribed offices of the Church were of course scrupulously observed (or if not scrupulously, at least in a spirit of becoming

decency); but the energies of the society were not exclusively occupied with, nor indeed mainly directed to, the performance of religious duties. The occupants of the monasteries wore the religious garb; but they were road-makers, farmers, merchants, lawyers, doctors, as well as priests. Up to the middle of the sixteenth century, communication between one district of Scotland and another was slow and laborious. There were tracks across the mosses which a pedestrian could use, and through the heather where a pack or saddle horse could be taken; but they were difficult at all times, and during rainy or wintry weather, dangerous, if not impassable. One would have expected that the road along the coast which led to Berwick, to York, to London, to Rome—the great highroad which every eminent Scotsman on his way to foreign Court or famous University had used age after age—would have been plainly marked and fairly maintained; but it was not so. Norfolk writes that the artillery for the siege of Leith would require to be sent by sea, “by reason of the deep and foul ways between Berwick and Leith;” and elsewhere he observes that the country is ill suited even for carts. The earliest roads in Scotland that deserved the name were made by the monks and their dependants; and were intended to connect the religious houses as trading

societies with the capital or the nearest seaport. A decent public road is indispensable to an industrial community; and a considerable proportion of the trade of the country was in the hands of the religious orders. They had depots in the burghs where they stored the produce of farm and workshop, and booths where it was sold. The monks of Melrose sent wool to the Netherlands; others trafficked in corn, in timber, in salmon. They were large employers of labour, and the peaceful peasant in the ecclesiastical vineyard had rights and privileges which the serfs of the nobles did not enjoy. Their service was thus extremely popular, and there is every reason to believe that they were good and generous masters. Many of them had been educated abroad, and had come into contact with the most enlightened of their contemporaries. Returning to their native valleys, they brought with them the wider views and the liberal tastes which they had acquired at Paris or Bologna. Some of them had studied medicine, others had studied law, others Aristotle and the schoolmen. They became the schoolmasters, the lawyers, the doctors of a community which was protected from the strife of the turbulent world outside by the sanctity which attached to the religious profession. The sons of the great nobles and of the country gentlemen were taught "grammar and

dialectic" in the library of the convent; the sick and the maimed were lodged in the hospital. There was thus ample scope for every taste, lay and clerical, practical and speculative,—from the monk who looked after the pigs and poultry, to the monk who illuminated a missal or composed a chronicle. Each community, each order, as was natural, had its characteristic likings and dishkings. One house turned out the best scholars and lawyers, another the finest wool and the sweetest mutton; one was famed for poetry or history, another for divinity or medicine.¹ There were drones among them, no doubt, but there are drones in every profession; and whoever fancies that the members of the religious orders planted in Scotland passed their lives in sloth and sensuality, is the victim of a delusion. The courtyard of a Scottish monastery during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was a busy thoroughfare, which, when business was pressing, might readily have been mistaken by a stranger for the market-place or the exchange.

For some time, however, before the Reformation, the burghs upon the coast, from the Scottish Sea (as the Firth of Forth was then

¹ We are told, for instance, that polite literature was cultivated at Cupar and Arbroath, | solid learning at Glasgow, historical study at St Colms, and so on.

called) to the Firth of Cromarty, had monopolised the general trade of the country. The burgh from an early period had been regarded with exceptional favour by the Scottish kings. Many of the charters which secure the privileges and define the duties of the burgesses, are of great antiquity; and before the unhappy strife with England had become chronic under Bruce and Stuart, several of these trading communities had attained prosperity and importance. A considerable foreign trade had been attracted, and foreign merchants, chiefly Flemings, had established themselves at the chief seaports. There was at first no common bond between the incorporations; but learning in course of time that union is strength, the principal towns formed themselves into trading confederacies, one of them representing the northern, the other the southern burghs, as divided by the "Mounth." At a later period the northern and southern leagues united in what is still known as the Convention of Royal Burghs.

Fife at that time was probably the most densely populated county in Scotland; flourishing burghs, still picturesque in their decay, were dotted thickly along its coasts; Buchanan alludes somewhere to the rich zone of townlets by which it was girdled; and the "grey cloth mantle with

its golden fringe" is the not infelicitous comparison attributed to his pedantic pupil. The Fife seaports make quite a goodly show in the records of the time—Kinghorn, Earlsferry, Elie, St Monance, Largo, Anstruther, Crail, St Andrews, Leven, Wemyss, Inverkeithing, Aberdour. Considering the extent of commerce at the time, their imports and exports were considerable. They exported, we are told, the furs of the marten and the weasel; the skins of the goat, the fox, and the red-deer (at an earlier period, of the beaver and the sable); wool, salt, salmon, white fish, and oysters,—the wool and the salmon possibly being the staple commodities. The merchants of Delft, Bruges, Lille, and Rouen, were their chief customers; and from the French and Flemish cities their vessels returned with the wines of Burgundy and Bordeaux, silk, fine cloth, the precious metals. The Flemings, who were settled in various districts of Scotland, had taught the native craftsmen to carve wood and work in leather; but the really fine pieces of artistic handiwork which decorated the churches—the sacerdotal robes, the illuminated horæ, the gold and silver vessels—were brought from abroad.

One is struck when running over the names of the Scottish burghs by the absence of any obvious law to account for the growth of one and

the decline of another. The Fife burghs have withered away. Fordoun, "a strong town, famous for the relics of St Palladius;" Candida Casa, "the ancient town and episcopal see of St Ninian," secure as marked notice from Pit-scottie as Glasgow and Dumfries. So far as we are able to judge from the evidence that exists, the three most important places in Scotland during the early part of Mary's reign were Edinburgh, St Andrews, and Aberdeen. Edinburgh, "the king's seat, where also is the Castle of Maidens, a very strong and defensible place;" St Andrews, "specially famous for the University, and beautified with the see of the Archbishop and Primate of all Scotland;" Aberdeen, "between Don and Dee, with a guidlie universitie, and two fair bridges, one of seven arches of four-square stone, verie rare and marvellous, and the other, ane arch of curious workmanship." As the key to the northern counties and the Gordon country, as well as the busiest seaport between Leith and Inverness, Aberdeen exercised no inconsiderable influence at an early period; but the leading events in the national history had for some time now been associated with St Andrews and Edinburgh. Before the close of the fifteenth century, Edinburgh had become the political, St Andrews the ecclesiastical, capital of Scotland.

“Our towns,” Leslie remarks, “we fortify not with walls.” It had at no period been the custom of the Scot to place his trust in stone and lime; and his rulers had taken care that the security of walled cities should not tempt him to become indolent in the use of arms. Bruce had advised his countrymen never to risk a pitched battle; and Douglas loved better to hear the lark sing than the mouse cheep. So long as they could retire upon a barren and hungry morass they were invincible; for they laid waste the country as they passed, and the “auld enemy” found little to plunder and less to eat. The capital itself had not been fortified till a comparatively recent period, and of all the lesser burghs Perth only had walls.

The mansions of the feudal nobility were sometimes erected within the municipal boundaries; but as a rule the great nobles lived at their own castles in the country, surrounded by their vassals and dependants. They were by no means exclusive; and a rude but abundant hospitality was extended to every kinsman however remote, and to any stranger who passed within hail. Hostelries had been established by James I. in burghs and market towns; but in the landward districts they were few and of ill repute, and except where the hospice of the monk took the place of the tavern, the passing

traveller could not but fare badly.¹ The houses of the peasantry were miserable cabins, thatched with reeds or straw, dark, narrow, and noisome, "wherein the people and the beasts," as Pit-scottie says, "do lie together." No one can help feeling that the architecture of the Border peel is entirely in harmony with the character of the country; it is as much a product of the soil in which it is rooted as the heather and the birch; and the same remark applies, a few notable exceptions notwithstanding, to the castles of the Scottish nobles in general. The towers scattered over the Lowlands were such as those in which the Maitlands dwelt—Lethingtons on a slighter and less ambitious scale; the idiomatic expression in stone and lime, if I may use the expression, of the temper of a warlike race—hardy, defiant, severely simple, rudely independent, as their own lives. The rudeness of the life, indeed, has possibly been exaggerated. If we can trust the letters and documents that remain, Hugh Rose of Kilravock, in his pleasant castle on the Nairn, bore a near resemblance in tastes and habits, in likings and dislikings, to the

¹ The monasteries both in England and Scotland were extensively used for the entertainment of travellers, many of them being in remote and secluded districts where no other shelter could be obtained. Thus it was urged on behalf of Hexham that there was no house within many miles.

country gentleman of to-day. Many conveniences of modern civilisation were no doubt lacking. He had no railway, or telegraph, or post-office, or daily paper; but these are not indispensable to "plain living and high thinking," and the cultivation of a wholesome national life. A man may be wise, sagacious, and politic who eats his black pudding off a pewter plate, and swallows his black broth with a wooden ladle.

"Aut quis

Simpuvium ridere Numæ, nigrumque catinum
Ausus erat?"¹

Yet the most cultivated taste finds in the baronial architecture of that age much that is admirable; and it is obvious (in some of the minor arts especially) that the craftsmen, lay and clerical, had attained remarkable proficiency. On the polished panel of hall or chapel, a cunning pencil has been at work; and the heavy

¹ The homely simplicity of considerable Lowland lairds excited the "Water Poet's" surprise. There were then no drapers or haberdashers in the country; and Taylor remarks upon the plain homespun clothes of the laird who maintained forty or fifty servants, and dispensed a lavish hospitality,—“his beaver being his blue bonnet, no shirts but of

the flax grown on his own ground, and of his wife and daughter's spinning; and his stockings, hose, and jerkin off his own sheep's wool." The family papers of the Roses of Kilravock were edited for the Spalding Club by Mr Cosmo Innes—one of the pleasantest and soundest writers on Scottish antiquities

oaken cabinets—the buist and the ambry—in which the household napery and silver were stored, are often marvels of quaint and delicate carving. The dress, too (of the upper classes at least), was extremely picturesque. The common people had been required by many sumptuary laws to restrain their love of fine clothes and gaudy colours, and to appear (except on holidays, when a somewhat livelier tint was lawful) in the homeliest and most primitive homespun. But the attire of the gentry, especially of the great dignitaries in Church and State, was sumptuous and superb. Sir Richard Maitland, as we have seen, complains that even the wives of simple burghers had taken to gold embroidery and delicate lace; and a rich and elaborate toilet had always been the besetting weakness (if we so regard it) of the great Norman noble. Even his morning undress—the light robe of mail which he wore when hunting or hawking or “harrying,”—must have charmed the eye of an artist; and the dress of high ceremonial,—the velvet robe or doublet, lined with rich furs and powdered with jewellery,—showed a thorough understanding—an instinct like that of a Parisian *modiste*—of the resources of brilliant colouring, and the harmonious combination of ponderous draperies. The art is lost; the modern Englishman in full dress is a dull and sombre if not entirely ludi-

crous figure. To the Puritan of the Commonwealth, to Tribulation-Wholesome and Praise-God-Barebones, the change from purple and fine linen to a Quaker-like drab is possibly to be attributed.

The great bulk of the community outside the towns, without distinction of class, were employed in agriculture. A considerable breadth of corn was sown in the Carse of Gowrie and the lowlands of Moray; but the farms elsewhere were mainly pastoral. The people were shepherds, and their "sheep-cotes" are constantly mentioned in the earliest charters. The occupation of husbandry, as I have said, was not confined to any one class—James the Fifth himself having been at one time a sheep-farmer on a great scale. We learn from Pitscottie that the king had ten thousand sheep "going in Ettrick Forest, in keeping by Andrew Bell;" and from Sadler, that the undignified conduct of his nephew, in "keeping sheep and such other vile and mean things," was the cause of lively annoyance to the King of England. James might obtain whatever he needed by plundering the Church; why should a king disgrace himself by embarking in trade? "That kind of profit," the envoy was instructed to point out, "cannot stand with the honour of a king's estate;" and the true policy was plainly indicated,—"rather by taking

some of the religious houses, by good and politic means establish your revenue in such sort as ye shall be able to live like a king, and yet not meddle with sheep." James, who was resolved to have no hand in the spoliation of the religious houses, turned away with a pleasant jest: "By my troth," quoth he, "I never knew what I had of my own, nor yet do."

The pastoral life is associated in idyllic poetry with simple tastes and abundance of leisure. Corydon lies on the banks of the stream all day long, and makes love to Phyllis. If his tastes are ruder and rougher, he hunts the deer with his dogs. He has no theatre within easy reach, but in the village ale-house there is gossip, and perhaps a song, of a winter night. Pastoral life in Scotland was probably much like pastoral life anywhere else—only a little sterner, a little more exacting, than in the South. Foreign visitors who ventured to cross the Tweed, found that while the women were easy in their manners, and "addicted to love," the men, young and old, rich and poor, were passionately fond of hunting. The Edinburgh townsmen had their Robin Hood and Abbot of Unreason—the thousand distractions of a busy and crowded capital; but in the country the love of sport was universal and exclusive of every other, and the number of wild animals in early times had been so enor-

mous, and the forest police so inefficient, that the passion was easily gratified.

Of the Caledonian bear, famous in the Roman arena, only a faint tradition remained. He had been extirpated at a remote period. So (except at one doubtful station on Loch Ness) had the beaver. But the wolf, the boar, and the wild white cattle were still not uncommon. When Leland wrote, even the southern part of Britain was covered with immense woods. Needwood was not far from the metropolis, and Needwood forest was twenty-four miles in circumference; while Channock Chase, the woodlands of Stafford, the wild country round Buxton and the Peak, connected the midland with the Border forests. A mighty forest, which included Ettrick and others, extended from Chillingham to Hamilton; further north the *Silva Caledonia* ran through Monteith and Strathearn to Athol and Lochaber. From these vast solitudes it was difficult to dislodge their savage inmates. The fierce wild boar—routing for acorns or wallowing in the mire—lurked among the reeds which fringed the western meres; so late as 1617 they were, we learn, still met with at Whalley. Of all the wild creatures, however, the wolf was the most troublesome and the most tenacious. He was an Ishmael from his birth; outside the beasts of venery and the forest, any one might

kill him and his whelps. But it was difficult to find their breeding-places, and the young were cunningly hidden among the rushes, furze, and rocks of the most inaccessible thickets. "They were richt noisome," Bellenden says, "to the tame bestial in all parts of Scotland;" and the sheep were folded nightly to escape their ravages. About the Blackwater and Rannoch, the passes were often rendered dangerous by reason of the multitude of rabid droves by which they were infested; and "spittals"—or shelters—had to be provided for the protection of belated travellers. The western Celts indeed had frequently to seek for burial-places on the islands along the coast—the brutes disinterring the dead who were buried on the mainland. Between 1427 and 1577, numerous Acts for their destruction were passed by the Parliament. The last great outbreak occurred during Mary's reign; and though several of the great woods were thereafter burnt down to root them out, they were not finally exterminated till towards the close of the seventeenth century. The wild white cattle were originally denizens of the Caledonian forest. They must have been in their prime—indeed they still are—noble animals: the cow delicate and finely limbed as a hind; the bull of purest white, with black muzzle and "mane of snow." Lord Fleming complained bitterly in

1570, that the Lennox faction had slain and destroyed the white kye and bulls of his forest of Cumbernauld, "to the great destruction of policy and hinder of the common weal." "For that kind of kye and bulls has been keepit these many years in the said forest," and the like were not to be found in any other part of the island—"as is well known." The race, however, is not yet extinct, if, as is probable, the herds at Cadzow and Chillingham represent the ancient breed.

Though the larger beasts of the chase had been considerably thinned out by the middle of the sixteenth century, immense quantities of game, from the red-deer to the golden plover, were then to be found in every district of Scotland. Game was a common and favourite article of food—though if it is true that the rank guillemot from the Bass was esteemed a delicacy among the upper classes, the taste of our ancestors cannot have been very fastidious. They had no Wild Birds Protection Act; but a close time for grouse, plover, partridges, and black game had been prescribed by Parliament, and extended from Lent to August. There were Acts also against the taking of their eggs, and in 1565 the shooting of water-fowl was absolutely prohibited. This may have been the consequence of Mary's visit to Fife in January of

that year, when, as Knox complains, she was magnificently banqueted everywhere, "so that such superfluity was never seen before within this realm; which caused the wild-fowl to be so dear that partridges were sold for a crown apiece." Such a price was of course entirely exceptional: in ordinary years, as we learn from accounts that have been preserved, a wild goose could be had for two shillings, a swan or crane for five, a partridge for eightpence, while plover, dottrel, curlew, wild-duck, teal, lapwing, red-shank, cost fourpence each. From the royal household books it appears that in addition to the birds just named, woodcock, black-cock, moor-fowl, larks, and sea-larks were usually to be found in the royal larder.

Both James V. and his daughter were fond of the chase. Mary was much at Falkland—a charming palace on the eastern slope of the Lomonds—where she could hunt and hawk at her leisure; and during the numerous journeys she made from one end of the kingdom to the other, she had abundant opportunity to enjoy her favourite amusement. Historians who have dwelt upon the indolent and voluptuous habits of the Queen (they have represented her as reading French novels in bed till mid-day) cannot be aware that during her stay in Scotland, half of each year at least was spent in the saddle.

Until her health broke, after her confinement, Mary was one of the hardest of women: she was frequently absent from the capital for months at a time—moving about from house to house, and seldom resting at one place for more than a night or two. Day after day she must have been in the saddle from early morning till dark; and to her companions in these expeditions the assertion (afterwards made by Buchanan and others) that a ride from Jedburgh to Hermitage and back was an unaccountable and unprecedented experience, would appear sufficiently absurd.

Several records of these royal hunting-parties have been preserved. James V., who on occasion would, as Pitscottie says, “ride out through any part of the realm him alone, unknown that he was king,” occasionally took his Court and the greatest of his nobles along with him to the hunting-field. The sport in Meggatland, when Huntly, Argyll, and Athole brought their deerhounds, was not confined to the eighteen score of deer that were slain; for as the same quaint and veracious chronicler adds significantly, “Efter this hunting the king hangit Johnie Armstrange.” At the great Athole hunt in 1529 there were killed “thirty score of hart and hind, with other small beasts, sic as roe and roebuck, woulff, fox, and wyld cattis.” Again, in the year 1563 Athole was the scene of a “royal hunt-

ing," at which Mary was present. For two months the Red-shanks had been driving the deer from the surrounding mountains into one compact body, so that not less than two thousand red-deer, besides roe and fallow, had been collected in Glen Tilt before the royal party arrived. One of the Queen's dogs being let loose upon a wolf, scared the main body, which broke through the beaters; yet the slaughter was great. Three hundred and sixty deer, with five wolves, and some roes, made up a goodly bag.¹

I have said that St Andrews had become the ecclesiastical capital of Scotland,—it was now also the scholastic; though the University of Aberdeen, a more recent erection, had already enlisted some distinguished teachers and produced some famous scholars. Even Leslie, while deploring the theological heresies which had taken root in its colleges, was ready to admit that philosophy and the "humanities" were ex-

¹ These monster "huntings" long continued popular. Taylor, who was in Scotland in 1619, and who had brought with him introductions to the Earl of Mar and Sir William Murray of Abercairney, found that they had gone to hunt at "Brea of Marr." He overtook them at Braemar, where hundreds of Celts, wearing kilts,

drove the deer to the sportsmen, who in the space of two hours bagged "eighty fat deer." Among the game, "caperkelles and termagants" (capercaillie and ptarmigan) are included. After supper in the gloaming, they lighted a fire of firwood "as high as a May-pole."

cellently taught. "The city of St Andrews," he says, "is the chief and mother city of the realm, where is a famous university and a notable school. Would to God," he continues, "they flourished as well in their theology as they flourish in their philosophy and other humane studies!" I do not know if any minute or vivid picture of its scholastic life prior to the Reformation has been preserved; and by the time that James Melville entered its walls, "the many fair, great, and excellent bells of St Andrews"—reminding the iconoclasts of the noble church they had wrecked—had been carried off, with much else that was characteristic of the bygone time. It is probable, however, from the Bishop's remark, that the curriculum of "ethnic" or liberal study at the University did not suffer any radical change at the instance of the Reformers, who indeed, after the first irrepressible outburst, do not appear to have retained any considerable influence in that conservative seat of letters.¹ Though Melville was not born till

¹ Melville's account of Knox's relations with the St Andrews professors of "the humanities" appears to show that the Reformer was rather apprehensive of the effects of "ethnic" or secular learning upon his scholars. His attitude, indeed,

to the "Auld and New Colleges" was strained, if not hostile it was "necessary above all things" (to quote his own words, as recorded by Richard Bannatyne) "to preserve the Church from the bondage of the Universities."

1556—and among his earliest recollections were the bonfires that blazed when James the Sixth was born—the narrative of his school and college career may be held to represent with substantial accuracy the character of the schooling which Scotsmen received during the minority of Mary.

James Melville (the nephew of the more celebrated Andrew, but a churchman of mark and repute in his time) was born in his father's house of Baldovy, near Montrose, and his early education was received in the neighbourhood. His father, who had studied theology with Doctor Macabeus in Denmark, and had "sat under" Philip Melanchthon at Wittenberg, was the minister of the parish of Meriton, and appears to have been a mild and sweet-tempered man, devoted to the little boy whose mother had died soon after his birth. "A verie honest burges of Montros has oft told me that my father wold lay me down on my back, playing with me, and lauch at me, because I could not rise, I was so fat; and wold ask me what ailed me. I wold answer, 'I am sa fat I may not gang.'" About the fifth year of his age the "grate Buik" was put into his hand; but as he made little progress in reading, he was sent when seven to a school, taught by the minister of Logie. "We learned

there the rudiments of the Latin grammar, with the vocables in Latin and French; also divers speeches in French, with the reading and right pronunciation of that tongue. We proceeded further to the Etymologie of Lilius and his Syntax, as also a little of the syntax of Linacre; therewith was joined Hunter's Nomenclatura, the Minora Colloquia of Erasmus, and some of the Eclogs of Virgil and Epistles of Horace; also Cicero, his epistles *ad Terentiam*." "I was at that school the space of almost five years, in the quhilk time, of public news I remember I heard of the marriage of Hendrie and Marie, King and Queen of Scots, Seingnour Davie's slauchter, of the king's murder at the Kirk of Field, of the Queen's taking at Carberry, and the Langside field." "Also I remember weill how we passed to the head of the town to see the fire of joy burning upon the steeple head of Montrose at the day of the King's birth." When he returned home, his sister Isabel would read and sing to him "David Lindsay's book concerning the latter judgment, the pains of hell and joys of heaven, whereby she would cause me baith greet and be glad;" and he himself would rehearse, in the church of Montrose, Calvin's Catechism "on the Sabbaths at afternoon." There came also at that time to Montrose a "post that frequented Edin-

burgh," and brought back psalm-books and "ballades" of Robert Semple's making, as well as Wedderburn's songs.

Melville went to St Andrews in 1571, and entered in the course of philosophy under Mr William Collace, "who had the estimation of the maist solid and lernit in Aristotle's Philosophie. Then he gave us a compend of his awin of Philosophie and the parts thereof—of Dialectik, of Definition, of Division, of Enunciation, and of a Syllogisme Enthymen, and Induction." There were thirty-six scholars in the class; but a little lad named David Eliston was far away the best, passing the others "as the aigle the howlet." "We enterit in the Organ of Aristotle's Logics that year, and learnit till the Demonstrations." "I wald gladly have been at the Greek and Hebrew tongues; but the languages were not to be gotten in the land." "But of all the benefits I had that year was the coming of that most notable prophet and apostle of our nation, Mr John Knox, to St Andrews." "Mr Knox would sometimes come in, and repose him in our College-yard, and call us scholars unto him and bless us, and exhort us to know God and His wark in our country, and stand by the guid cause, to use our time weill, and learn the guid instructions, and follow the guid example of our masters."

Melville's later "testimony" does not concern us here; but these notices of his early life are very graphic. Knox is popularly identified with the institution of the parish school, and there can be no doubt that he was genuinely anxious to extend and improve the educational machinery of the time. It does not appear, however, that during his life any considerable advance was made. The nobles were greedy; the ministers miserably poor; there were no funds available for the endowment of parochial teachers, and few were appointed till a much later period. The schools that were to be found in communities like Montrose had existed for many years, and were originally connected with the neighbouring monasteries. The monks were abolished, but the schools remained; and though of course affected by the teaching of the Reformers, and reflecting the progress of religious opinion, were really a survival from the Catholic Church.

A printing-press had been established in Scotland before the battle of Flodden was fought (1507 is the date commonly assigned); but the number of books issued during the next fifty years was inconsiderable. The editions of popular poems and Acts of Parliament, printed before the close of Mary's reign, that have been preserved, are now rare and costly; a copy of the Scots Acts, which had been bought for a few

shillings in 1779, was recently sold for upwards of £150. Almost all the books published in Scotland till a quite recent period, indeed, have become extremely scarce; they were bought for use, and not for show, and have, in fact, been "thumbed" out of existence. The chap-books that were carried about the country by the chapmen on their stout little nags were mostly "blasphemous rhymes,"—the concise and not too flattering criticism which the churchmen who drew the statute of 1551 applied to such compositions as the 'Guid and Godly Ballates.' It is difficult to determine what proportion of "the current literature" of the first half of the sixteenth century in Scotland—the contemporary prose and verse—had been committed to print; but it may be assumed that it was not large, and that much of it remained in manuscript,—the manuscript being transmitted from hand to hand, and copied as opportunity served. The old popular songs of Scotland, which sprang from the soil as did the Border ballad, have perished; and had it not been for the industry of Maitland and Bannatyne, even the more elaborate productions of a *literary* poet like Dunbar might have been lost. Some of his most characteristic poems, indeed, were included in the earliest volume printed at the Edinburgh press in 1508 by Chapman and Miller; but the antiquaries

of the last century were not aware that a single copy of that volume was in existence. The few tattered pages of the only copy that has been recovered are now in the Advocates' Library.

It may be said with very little exaggeration, that nearly the whole literature produced in Scotland up to this time had taken the form of verse.¹ We have now gained, I hope, a more or less clear understanding of the material condition of the people: unless we know something of the subjects that enlisted their sympathies, appealed to their tastes, and delighted their imagination, we shall fail to understand what manner of men they were. Religion, politics, literature, are the three most potent forces that mould society; the religion and politics of the age must be separately treated; but before I close this chapter, a brief survey of Scottish literature as a moral and spiritual factor in the formation of the Scottish character, as well as the intellectual atmosphere of the men and women who

¹ In fact, the only considerable work in the vernacular, written before the death of James V, was Bellenden's translation of Hector Boece's '*History of the Scottish People*'. It is an admirable specimen of the Scots tongue at its best, and, as the Archdeacon did not

adhere very closely to his text, it has much of the spirit and vigour of an original work. The first edition of the '*Scotorum Historiæ*' was printed at Paris about 1527, and the translation appeared in 1536—printed at Edinburgh by Thomas Davidson.

were the contemporaries of Lethington, may not be uninviting or un instructive.

The forms which Scottish poetry assumed between the age of Thomas the Rhymer and the age of Sir David Lindsay are capable of broad, if somewhat rough, definition. Scottish poetry had passed through three distinct stages: the writers who found their themes in the mediæval romance had been succeeded by the writers who found their themes in the national history; and these in their turn by writers who may be described as didactic—the poets of morality, speculation, reflection, analysis. The last class may be divided again into the euphuistic and realistic schools,—the earlier didactic poetry being as a rule distinguished by such extravagance of conceit and fantastic quaintness of invention as we find in the Elizabethan euphuists; the later by a quite remarkable sincerity, simplicity, and caustic force. Until we come to Burns, indeed, we do not find anything in Scottish literature more terse and incisive, more direct and trenchant, than the satire of Dunbar.

The mediæval story of Arthur and his knights was perhaps the only “light literature” to be found in the Scottish mansion-house up to the close of the fourteenth century. James of Douglas, Lord of Dalkeith, in 1392, made a testament, in which he left to one friend “all of my

books of grammar and dialectic," and to another "all my books as well of civil law and statutes of the kingdom of Scotland as of *romance*." The schoolmen, the statutes of the realm, and the romance-writers,—these were the works, and the only works, that the library of one of the great Scottish nobles then contained. Very little, however, is known of the Scottish romance-writers. In Barbour's poem, the fugitive Bruce, to lighten the monotony of their exile, reads to his friends "the romance of worthy Ferembras"; and there are occasional allusions, in other writers, to this early form of fiction. The romance of 'Sir Tristrem'¹ is said to have been written by Thomas Learmonth of Ercildoune, the 'Geste of Kyng Horn' being also ascribed to him, as well as that strange and fancifully picturesque ballad upon his interview with the Queen of Faerie, and his descent into elf-land, which is familiar to all lovers of poetry. Besides the 'Sir Tristrem' of the Rhymer, one or two other fragments of the Scottish romance poet—the most important of which are assigned to "the gude Schir Hew of Eglinton"—have been preserved. But they are hardly of a stamp to make us regret that so many have perished.

¹ An admirable version of 'Sir Tristrem,' edited by George P. McNeill, LL.B., Advocate, has been lately issued by the Scottish Text Society.

The poetry is as indifferent as the morality. The ethical system of the medieval romance is certainly a very curious and rather perplexing business. Reverence for the honour of woman is said to have been the absorbing sentiment of the knightly religion; yet there are few of the heroines of chivalry who do not live in "notour" adultery; and the most valiant knight at the tourney or on the battle-field is commonly the most dissolute in domestic life. The marriage vow is never strictly observed, and is constantly treated with open or implied contempt; while the relation between the lover and his mistress is regarded as far more binding and sacred. The faithless wife may be extenuated and extolled; but the woman who is false to her paramour merits the last penalties that the courts of the gay science can inflict. A generation which has accepted the Tennysonian version of the Arthurian legend will be surprised, and probably shocked, by the strength of the invective which the learned Roger Ascham directed against the Knights of the Round Table, and the ladies whose favours they wore. "In our forefathers' time, when Papistrie as a standing poole covered and overflowed all England, few books were red in our toong, saving certayne books of chivalrie, as they sayd, for pastime and pleasure, which, as some say, were made in monasteries by idle

monks and wanton chanons. . . . This is good stuff for wise men to laughe at, or honest men to take pleasure at. Yet I know when God's Bible was banished the Court, and 'Morte Arthure' receaved into the Prince's chamber. What toys the daily reading of such a booke may worke in the will of a yong gentleman or a yong maide, that liveth welthely and idlely, wise men can judge, and honest men doe pittie."

The songs which the people sung are lost; only the well-known lines about the golden age of Alexander III. (preserved by Wyntown), and as many about the great victory at Bannockburn, have come down to us. So that until we reach Barbour, the first of the annalists, the names even of the "makeris" have been forgotten.

The notion of throwing the history of the world into irregular verse could only have occurred to men who were very ingenious, very idle, and intensely prosaic. These, for the most part, were exactly the kind of persons who undertook the work. The annalists were ecclesiastics who had been taught the scholastic philosophy and the scholastic theology. Any kind of literary occupation must have been welcome to men of scholarly accomplishment, who, shut up in remote monasteries, were divorced from the affections of domestic and the ambitions of public

life. The metrical chronicles in which the fables of history or the traditions of the people were reproduced with tedious fidelity in involved and ungraceful rhyme, cannot be approved as poetry. But they are valuable to the historian. Though the men who composed them were not gifted with the vision and faculty divine, or indeed with much literary aptitude of any kind, their accounts of contemporary events may generally be relied on, and their pictures of ancient manners are sometimes graphic, and always useful and interesting.

It would be excessively unjust, however, to class John Barbour with the common herd of annalists. The Archdeacon of Aberdeen was an authentic poet.

Barbour was born at Aberdeen in the early part of the fourteenth century, and he lived till near its close. He was educated at Aberbrothick, but he frequently visited Oxford (as the safe-conducts granted by the English King bear) "for purposes of study." By the year 1375 'The Bruce,' he tells us, was about half finished, and a few years afterwards a pension of twenty shillings a-year was bestowed upon him in acknowledgment of his services by King Robert II. He appears to have been a voluminous writer. Wyntown mentions a work on the genealogy of the Scottish Kings, compiled by the Arch-

deacon ; and Henry the Minstrel thus alludes to him in his ' Wallace ' —

“ Master Barbour, quilk was a worthi clerk ;
He said the Bruce amang his other werk.”

A contemporary of Chaucer, Barbour is entitled to a place not far removed from that occupied by the father of English poetry. ‘ The Bruce ’ is unquestionably a great work. It relates a heroic story with force, fire, and picturesqueness. That story had been only recently concluded. Barbour had spoken with the men who fought at Bannockburn. The hearts of the people still beat high when they recalled the great victory which had secured their freedom. To this intimate connection with the actors the animated earnestness of the poem is to be ascribed. The interest which the author expresses is not feigned. He relates a story in which he thoroughly believes, and which engages his keenest sympathies. The cause of Bruce is the cause of freedom and of the Scottish people ; those who have betrayed it or its friends are traitors to liberty, and as such are sternly denounced. “ In hell condampnyt mot they be.” Such is the spirit of the writer, who was evidently in other respects a man of liberal cultivation, moderate in opinion, and, like many of the Scottish ecclesiastics, not intolerant in religion. His book is in conse-

quence full of life. There is a glow on the page. Easy, simple, unpretentious in tone — garrulous sometimes as a village gossip — the Archdeacon fires up, rises into strong, clear, emphatic speech, whenever any noble deed stirs his imagination or provokes his sympathy. His cheek flushes and his pulse throbs. This is the charm of ‘The Bruce.’ It is clear as noonday that this courteous dignitary of the Church, who derives ten pounds a-year from the customs of Aberdeen, loves truth and freedom and the right loyally, and hates whatever is mean, or shabby, or base, or dishonest. His eye moistens when he records the woman-like tenderness which his hero extends to the weak; and the noble words on freedom come direct from his heart. The figures who move on his pages are drawn, moreover, with individual distinctness and distinction of outline. His insight into character is really fine, and he sometimes introduces a slight touch of rare excellence—so excessively truthful, delicate, and refined, that it comes on us as a surprise. One only of these characteristic touches can be noted here. Bruce, with his own arm, has barred a narrow pass against a host of enemies, and when the battle is over, the soldiers crowd round their leader :—

“ Syk wordis spak thai of the king,
And for his hey wndretaking

Farlyit, and yarnyt hym for to se,
That with hym ay wes wont to be."

They long to look upon him as if they had never looked upon him before. The great deed has removed him from them ; he has become strange to them, as a prophet becomes strange to his brethren when he returns from the innermost sanctuary with the glory of the Lord about his head. This eager curiosity of the companions who had fought by his side for years, as if the sight of the hero might help to explain the heaven-inspired might which he had put forth, is a fine and imaginative trait.

Andrew Wyntown ought to have been a poet. His lines were cast in pleasant places. The canon regular of St Andrews was transferred to the monastery of St Serf. The Priory of St Serf was situated on the Inch of Lochleven, not far from that other island where Mary's captivity was passed. Here, amid the solitudes of that lonely lake, "betwene the Lomownde and Benarty," these remote ecclesiastical pioneers, the Culdees, had planted a religious house at a very early period. They were succeeded by a colony of the canons of St Augustine ; and this colony, about the close of the fourteenth century, Andrew Wyntown was sent to rule. Culdees and canons have departed, and the Inch has returned to its original tenants. The mallard haunts the reeds,

and the black-headed gull breeds upon the shingle.

But the peaceful Prior was only an annalist. He had a tolerable eye for the picturesque, and his descriptions are sometimes animated enough ; but, for the most part, his versified chronicle reads like an inventory. He was a learned man for his day, and the shelves of the little island library must have been tolerably well furnished. He alludes to many of the medieval poets and philosophers, and he mentions by name the authorities from whom he derived his materials—the Bible, Orosius, Petrus Comestor, Martinus Polonus, “wytht Ynglis and Scottis storys syne.” Some of the stories which he relates are sufficiently startling, and he believes implicitly in the marvels which he records ; yet his painstaking narrative, especially of events which happened near his own time, retains a certain historical value.

Henry the Minstrel once enjoyed a wide popularity. He was the second Homer—not because of his blindness only. But his ‘Schir William Wallace’ is now wellnigh forgotten. It wants the poetic salt which keeps Barbour’s poem fresh ; and his hero is a Jack-the-Giant-killer—a mythical slaughterer—who is not believed in out of the nursery. The Archdeacon of Aberdeen was a scholar and a politician as well as a poet,

and his work is penetrated by high intelligence and a lofty spirit of patriotism; but Blind Harry rarely rose above the doggerel sing-song of the street ballad-monger. The real Wallace, so far as we can judge, was a sagacious, valiant, and single-hearted man—a martyr whose death consecrated a cause that might otherwise have failed; but Blind Harry's 'Schir Wilham' is a melodrama of the bloodiest dye, always extravagant, frequently grotesque, and not unfrequently revolting.

The annalists were succeeded by the more strictly literary poets, whom, for want of a better name, I call didactic. I have divided them roughly into euphuists and realists: James the First and Robert Henryson representing the former; Dunbar, Douglas, and Lindsay the latter class. None of these poets, indeed, were euphuists in the sense in which John Lly was a euphuist. An ornate and corrupt diction was unfamiliar to Scottish ears. Nothing can be happier or terser than Barbour's style at its best, and Barbour's supremacy was for long undisputed. But this simplicity of taste in the case of the earlier euphuists was mainly confined to the language. The ideas are grotesque, the forms artificial, and the machinery—where it does not break down entirely—involved and laborious. If the hero falls in love, he cannot say so plainly

and be done with it. We have to follow him to the Court of Venus; we have to listen to a long harangue from Minerva and her owls; and we have, aided by the Virgin Mary, to propitiate Cupid and the Graces. Elaborate allegories that are even more tedious are bound up with this mythological trumpery. "Good Hope" drives us desperate. The interminable exhortations of "Patience" try the sweetest temper. Of Henryson's shorter poems, for instance, the most popular among his contemporaries was that entitled the 'Garment of Gude Ladyis,' in which every article of female dress, down to the garter, was identified with some grace or virtue! Yet, curiously enough, though they fantastically disguised the passions and the emotions, in one respect these writers were always natural. Their appreciation of the humorous was keen and true. They attacked abuses with no inconsiderable force and shrewdness of satire. Their direct and vigorous ridicule at least never lost itself in the mists of allegory. It is these parts of their writings—these, and an occasional touch of unpremeditated pathos—that we continue to read with interest. The mythologies and the allegories have grown musty and ill-flavoured, but the scraps of pleasantry are still living.

The story of James I. is a romantic and melancholy one. He was the second son of Robert III

by Arabella, daughter of Sir John Drummond of Stobhall,—his elder brother being that unlucky Duke of Rothesay who, if the story is true, was starved to death by his uncle at Falkland. Born in 1394, he was barely twelve years old when, on his way to France, he was captured by the English cruisers. During his captivity in England, which lasted till 1424, he resided successively at London, Nottingham, and Windsor; and it was during this period that the Lady Jane Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, granddaughter of the Duke of Lancaster, and so connected with the blood-royal of England, excited the romantic love which is described in ‘*The Kingis Quair*.’ James returned home with an English bride, and was crowned at Scone on the 21st of May 1424. A more accomplished prince never governed Scotland. He had studied philosophy and jurisprudence; he was a painter, a musician, and a poet—a keen hunter and a dexterous swordsman. Many of these accomplishments were rare in his native land, and were not probably regarded with any particular favour by an illiterate society; but the mild and graceful scholar quickly convinced his turbulent subjects that liberal studies had not incapacitated him for vigorous rule. He kept the nobles in order, and he reformed the clergy. He founded the University of St Andrews, and he diligently

encouraged commerce, literature, and the arts. His reign is an oasis in the desert of Scottish history. It was unfortunately cut short. The King was assassinated on the night of the 20th February 1437, in the monastery of the Dominican friars at Perth, by a party of conspirators who were in league with his uncle, the Earl of Athole. The evening before his death was spent in the usual way — “Yn reading of romans, in syngyng and pypyng, in harpyng, and in other honest solaces of grete pleasance and disport.”¹

If ‘Christ’s Kirk of the Grene’ was written by James (it is now maintained to be of later date, by argument which apparently assumes that the existing poem cannot be a modernised version of an older work), his vein of humour must have been of no mean order. The fun, if a little boisterous, is genial and hearty, and the poem long enjoyed a more than local celebrity:—

“ One likes no language but the Faery Queen,
A Scot will fight for Christ’s Kirk o’ the Green.”

The ‘King’s Quair,’ which he dedicates to his masters, Gower and Chaucer, and in which he celebrates the attractions of his future consort, is, however, his best-known work; and, in spite

¹ Every lover of poetry is aware that Rossetti’s fine ballad, “The King’s Tragedy,” is based upon the traditional stories to which this foul murder gave rise.

of its mythological machinery, contains many passages sweet, winning, and simple. The language, as in the lines beginning, "O besy goste, ay flickering to and fro," is sometimes singularly happy; and the picture of the Lady Jane, walking in the early morning below the window of the captive King, is fresh and vivid, as if taken directly from nature.

"Gude Mr Robert Henryson" (it is thus that Dunbar alludes to the author of the 'Testament of Cresseid') birched the boys of Dunfermline towards the close of the fifteenth century. The provincial dominie wrote one or two poems, simple in feeling and vigorous in style, which it is hardly fair to forget. Like much of the poetry of the period, however, they hover in an uncertain way between the true and the fantastic. Inexpert in the use of their weapons, inexperienced in the management of the passions, unprotected by the overseeing power which kindles and restrains, the poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries "went aft agee." No supreme artistic insight kept them straight; a false note, in music or in emotion, did not pain them. Their ingenuity, in short, was their ruin; they were sure to run their best feelings to death or into sheer unnaturalness. Henryson's conception of Saturn, for example, is freezingly grim; but he cannot stop until he has told us that the god's

arrows are "feathered with ice and headed with hailstones"—a minute and over-nice conceit which spoils the picture. One scene only is entirely and continuously good, and shows the real power that Henryson possessed. The false Cresseid, as a punishment for her incontinence, has been smitten with leprosy; and, while begging with her wretched companions along the street, she encounters her hero-lover, who is returning from a brilliant and successful charge. She is sadly changed, but there is something in the bleared face of the leper that recalls to Troilus the charming grace and bewitching beauty of Cresseid,—“sometime his awin darling.” He gazes upon her in silence for a moment, casts a purse into her lap, and sorrowfully resumes his march. That silent interview, that pause during which, although there is an uncertain and uneasy sense of pain in the hearts of both, no direct recognition takes place, is instinct with the true spirit of tragic poetry.

William Dunbar was the greatest Scottish poet of the fifteenth century,—having had in any century, indeed, few rivals. There is something about Dunbar which cannot fail to attract. He is brilliant, satirical, inventive; his wit is vigorous, and he has a wealth of words, sometimes solemn and impressive, sometimes keen and incisive; but the hardy and masculine indepen-

dence, the direct and personal force of his genius, is its chief charm. Though he hung about Holyrood, he was no courtier. He sometimes condescended to flatter, but he did it with an ill grace. There was a want of reverence in him, and of the facility which suits the atmosphere of a court. A brave, fiery, keen-spirited, irascible man, rather apt to use unconventional colloquial language,—such I take him to have been. It is very likely that he was imprudent; his passions were hot, and his tongue sharp and cutting. He felt no pity for folly; his contempt for baseness could not be kept decorously veiled; he attacked with unsparing ridicule all the impostors, lay or clerical, of his day. Thus he made many enemies. He spoke the truth, which cannot be done on easy terms even at present, and enemies found many chinks in his armour. Both his life and his writings supplied abundant material for friendly criticism. He was obviously a dangerous character, a pestilent fellow, who was intolerant of convention, and who treated dignified dulness, however exalted, with scant respect. The plain speaking of the *Two Married Women* and the *Widow* must have startled an age which was used to plain speaking. Kind Kittok's adventure in heaven is an audacious conception, which no later master of the grotesque—not Burns in "*Tam o' Shanter*," not Byron in the

“Vision of Judgment,” not Goethe in the “Faust” prologue—has contrived to surpass; and we can still figure to ourselves the consternation it must have provoked in precise and orthodox circles.¹ So William Dunbar never obtained a benefice, and his life wore away in penury and disappointment. He felt this neglect keenly,—the *sæva indignatio* hurt him, as it hurt Swift. The mortified poet grew more bitter as he grew old; made sharper jests, and put more gall in his ink. Yet, like Swift, he could love as cordially as he hated; and he praises those whom he admires—the reverend Chaucer, the moral Gower, Barbour, Henrisoun, and the rest of the Scottish “makaris”—with the ungrudging warmth of a generous nature.²

Gavin Douglas was the third son of Archibald, Earl of Angus—the famous Bell-the-cat; and as a scion of the great house of Douglas,

¹ “Scho slepit quhile the morne at noon, and rais arly;
 And to the yettis of hevin fast cam the wife fair,
 And by Sanct Petir, in at the yet scho stale prevely;
 God lukit and saw her lattin in, and lewch his hert sair.
 And thar, yeris sevin,
 She levit a gud life,
 And was our Ladyis hen wife;
 And held Sanct Petir at stryfe,
 Ay quhile scho wes in hevin.”

² The most elaborate and accurate edition of ‘The Poems of William Dunbar’ is that prepared for the Scottish Text Society by the late Mr Small.

he occupied a foremost place in the ranks of the Scottish nobles. At an early age he was made Rector of Linton, and he continued to hold that rustic benefice until, in 1501, he was preferred to the Provostship of St Giles. It was during this period of his life, and amid the pastoral scenery of the Tyne, that he wrote most of his poems. Two of his brothers and two hundred gentlemen of the name of Douglas fell on the disastrous field of Flodden; and in consequence, probably, the plaintive lament, "The Flowers of the Forest," has been sometimes attributed to the Bishop. Within a year of her husband's death, the widow of James IV. was united to the youthful Earl of Angus, the nephew of Gavin Douglas, and the grandson of Bell-the-cat. The courtly poet soon became a favourite at Court, and was destined for the primacy by the Queen, but, after a prolonged and exciting struggle, was forced to content himself with the bishopric of Dunkeld.¹ Though he was deeply implicated in the violent intrigues of a turbulent age, the Bishop appears to have been a man of mild temper, simple manners, and profuse hospitality. "King Hart" and "the Palice of Hon-

¹ Even at Dunkeld he had difficulties: his rival, Andrew Stewart, holding the steeple of the cathedral and the palace, sent a shower of cannon-shot at the deanery, where the new bishop was lodged.

our" were once famous poems; and till a comparatively recent date his loose but spirited translation of the "*Æneid*" might be found on many a cottage book-shelf. His taste in poetry was not particularly pure. Rapid and impetuous, but turbid and discoloured, the style of the Highland bishop may be compared not inaptly to one of his Highland streams, during what in Scotland is called a *spate*. In his writings, moreover, there are few of those satirical or personal touches which give so keen an interest to Dunbar's. He had been up to a certain point a successful man. Fortune had smiled upon him; the Court had been gracious. A son of the great house of Douglas could not, even in his fall, have been exposed to the keen social mortifications which made Dunbar so bitter.

Gavin Douglas died in 1522, at which time Sir David Lindsay of the Mount had entered on his thirty-third year. Sir David was a voluminous writer; but it is probable that he would have been pretty nearly forgotten by this time had he not allied himself with the early Reformers, to whose cause he rendered essential service.

In Scotland, as in England, the satirical poets were the vanguard of the Reformation. The freedom of speech which these writers enjoyed unchallenged must prove inconvenient to histo-

rians who are used to associate the supremacy of the Catholic Church with a period of gloomy and inquisitorial intolerance. An occasional foray was undertaken by the bishops; but, speaking generally, the free-and-easy comments of the popular satirists were left unchecked. The truth is, that the upper clergy had grown fat, indolent, and luxurious, and were not disposed to deal very rigorously with wit and invective, even when directed against themselves. The Protestant apologist declaims against the corruption of the prelates,—the fact being that they were not so much corrupt as decrepit. Bored to death by the monotony of the religious life, mumbling Latin prayers which meant less than nothing to their minds, with “no more individual fervour of belief than of individual levity of disbelief,” they had reached the stage of spiritual dotage. Some of them, indeed, it is only fair to remember, were men of high cultivation, who liked poetry, and did not care, we may presume, to burn its professors; and there were, moreover, sagacious and virtuous men in their ranks who were really anxious that the scandals which weakened their communion should be put away, that the cancer which was eating into the heart of the Church should be cut out. The light artillery of the popular poets was thus permitted to become a potent, if impalpable, ally of the

Reformers. Henryson had exposed the abuses of the Consistorial Courts (the crying grievance of the age); nor had he hesitated to place popes, cardinals, bishops, and abbots in the infernal regions, where they—

“For evill disponying of thair places rent,
In flambe of fyre were bitterly turment.”

In the “Daunce” the fiends laugh heartily at “the bair schevin necks” of the priests; and in the “Freris of Berwick”—an admirably spirited and brilliant dramatic poem, which, I believe, could have been written by no one except Dunbar—the vulgar habits and dissolute lives of the monks are ridiculed with great comic power. Another poem—“A General Satire”—sometimes attributed to Dunbar, sometimes to Inglis, Bishop of Culross, is mercilessly severe upon the higher clergy. “Sic pryd of prellattis,” who would neither preach nor pray; “sic hant of harlettis with thame nicht and day”—had never before been known in Scotland. Other modes of attack were devised. Comic and obscene songs were translated into “Gude and Godly Ballates.” Shakespeare, when he describes the Puritan who “sings psalms to horn-pipes,” refers, no doubt, to this practice; and a somewhat similar metamorphosis is alluded to in “The Merry Wives of Windsor,”—“But they do

no more keep pace together than the Hundredth Psalm to the tune of 'Green Sleeves.'"

Sir David Lindsay was probably the first man in high station who publicly ventured to beard the clergy.¹ Lindsay, with a remarkably easy and fluent style, united considerable power of humorous invective. In his "satiric touch" there is none of the imaginative richness and amplitude of Dunbar; yet while the one was neglected and forgotten, the name of "Davie Lindsay" was familiar till the other day in every Lowland cottage. His character, besides, was intrepid and fearless; and in "The Monarchie," "The Three Estaitis," "Kitteis Confession," and numerous other pieces, he attacked the abuses of the Church with singular force, and—it must be added—incredible plainness, of speech. (He could be as nasty, indeed, as Swift at his nastiest.) He ridicules the absur-

¹ Calderwood mentions a black friar, John Killore, who was "cruelly murdered" upon the Castlehill at Edinburgh, in the year 1539. "Friar Killore set furth the history of Christ's passion in the form of a comedy, which was acted at Stirling in the king's presence, upon a Good Friday, in the morning, in which all things were so lively expressed, that the verie simple people understood and confessed, that as the priests and obstinate Pharisees persuaded the people to refuse Christ Jesus, and caused Pilate condemn him, so did the bishops and men called religious blind the people, and persuade princes and judges to persecute such as professed Jesus Christ his blessed Gospel. This plain speaking so inflamed them, that after that they thirsted ever for his blood."

dity of the Latin service,—priests and people
 “nocht understanding quhat they sing nor say.”
 He assures his audience that “popes, patriarchs,
 and prelates venerable,” are made over to sensuality and other evil lusts. The bishops have palaces and places, “and want no pleasure of the fairest faces.” Friars will ready entrance get, when lords are “haddin at the yet.” His pardoner produces a ludicrous jumble of charms,—the jaw of Fin Macoull, the cord that hanged John Armstrong :—

“Of gude hemp soft and sound ;
 Gude haile people, I stand for’d,
 Quaever beis hangit with this cord
 Neidis never to be dround ;”—

and “Verritie” is treated as a delinquent by the ecclesiastical Court, and put in the stocks—the New Testament, “in English toung, and printed in England,” having been found in her wallet. Kitty, after some frank and unreserved confessions, is absolved by her priest for a plack,—

“And mokil Latyne he did mummill ;
 I hard na thing but *humml bumml*.”

“The Three Estaitis” was more than once acted before the Court ; and though it was preposterously prolix—“lestand fra nyne houris afore none till six hours at evin”—we can understand how the spectators must have enjoyed its novel and racy delineations of ecclesiastical delinquen-

cies, and the important part it must have played in preparing the minds of the people for the religious revolution that was at hand. The last performance appears to have taken place on 12th April 1554, before the Queen and Commons, on the play-field at Edinburgh ; and the author died in 1555.

This is briefly the history of Scottish poetical literature down to the middle of the sixteenth century. Poetry had reached an age when men were beginning to weary of grotesque conceits and scholastic ingenuities, and when reality, directness, and vital truth were urgently demanded. In the literature, as in the religion and science, of the new era, we find an intense desire and determination to return to *fact*. The fictions of poets, the fictions of astrologers, the fictions of priests, were put aside ; and the barest and homeliest truth received a welcome which had been hitherto reserved for the imposing but meretricious "idols" of the imagination. The people were resolved no longer to tolerate a lie, however fair and comely ; but to bring themselves without loss of time into tolerably honest relations with the universe. How far they succeeded, how far they failed in doing so, is the history of the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER THREE.

THE FEUDAL SOCIETY.

MAITLAND—who had been engaged in her service since 1554—became Secretary of State to Marie of Lorraine in 1558.

It was the eve of the Reformation in Scotland. The forms of the old society, half military, half monastic, which had come down from the middle age, were still in existence; the system of state-craft and priest-craft, which had determined the fate of countless beings for many generations, though stricken at the heart, still presented to the indifferent onlooker an unshaken front. The mediæval Catholicism of Scotland, like its mediæval feudalism, was still, it seemed, virile and vigorous. But—as we can see now—the life somehow had been eaten out of it; it was a house of cards which the lightest breeze would shatter. The years between 1554 and 1558 may be taken as the dividing-line between two epochs. Maitland's political life belongs mainly to the new

epoch ; what it is indispensable to say of the old may properly be said now. The retrospect is not unnecessary ; the historical continuity of great institutions is not lightly broken ; age is linked to age ; even the Reformers, though they refused to keep any terms with the ecclesiastical past, were unable to cut themselves quite adrift. Civil and ecclesiastical forces working together had provided some sort of government for Scotland. I propose in this chapter to deal with the Government then existing—as a form of the feudal societies which had once prevailed universally in northern Europe—on its political or secular side.

When Lethington entered public life, the concentration of the administrative, political, and legislative functions of the State in the capital had already made considerable progress. The Sovereign, in a country where feudalism retains its vitality, has only a nominal supremacy. A strong central government is inconsistent with the spirit of a system which, in return for certain well-defined military services, devolves upon the great vassals its civil and criminal jurisdiction, the duty of executing justice and the right to inflict punishment. Elsewhere in Europe, the old order was crumbling away, and men had begun to figure to themselves, however crudely and vaguely, the large outlines of a new society.

While in France and England the disintegrating forces, directed by astute ministers and masterful rulers, were freely and visibly at work, in Scotland the power of the great feudatories was still apparently intact. But though the Baron's Court might continue to sit; though the right of pit and gallows might be retained; though a Gordon or a Douglas or a Campbell might still maintain in Border dale or Highland glen a more than royal state,—the spell had somehow lost its charm. In Scotland, too, the knell of feudalism had been sounded. The executive force was being gradually centralised, and the Court of Session, as a supreme and final court of justice, had been established. The protracted contest between the Stuart kings and a fierce and barbarous aristocracy had not been entirely fruitless; spite of numberless misadventures, and the persistent ill-luck which dogged them like a shadow, the Stuarts had ranged themselves—prematurely it might be—on the side which in the long-run was bound to win. Mary Stuart was the latest victim in the obstinate and bitter struggle between the Crown and its vassals; and many causes—besides the hostility of the nobles—contributed to her defeat.

Marie of Lorraine became Regent in 1554; and before 1554 the thirteen ancient Celtic earldoms had, with one exception, died out. The

exception was Mar, and even Mar was in abeyance. It was not until 1565 that Lord Erskine's right was vindicated by Queen Mary, as in our own day the right of a later Erskine has been vindicated by Queen Victoria. Through inveterate usage, indeed, the old territorial areas, the old territorial titles, were, in the main, retained; but the tenure had been feudalised, and the nobles were Normans.

Twice since the rise of the feudal aristocracy two great houses—the one of Norman, the other of Flemish extraction—had attained exceptional distinction and unbounded authority,—the house of Comyn and the house of Douglas. Some brief record of their history may enable us to follow the fortunes of the Scottish monarchy from a comparatively early age down to the period at which my narrative begins.¹

It was probably the European reputation of a later Earl that obtained for the "Count of Buchan" a place among the Scottish auxiliaries of Charlemagne,—

"Quell' avaltor, che un drago verde lania,
El' insegna del Conte de Boccana,"—

¹ I do not desire to poach on the preserves of the pedigree-hunter—being well aware that whoever ventures into that difficult country does so at his own risk. The history of these

old families is beset with difficulties, and the casual inquirer must be satisfied if the broad outlines of his sketch, as illustrative of the national annals, are fairly accurate.

but long before John Stuart was born, the Comyns had appropriated the name and made it famous in Scotland. For two centuries the chiefs of this great house were among the *Magnates Scotiæ*. Not many families of the same importance have been more utterly swept away. Some chance reference in an old chronicle, a brief and confused page of the Scottish peerage, a few crumbling walls along the shores of the northern sea and among the Border glens, are all that remain to us of a house that was once more powerful than the Crown.

This illustrious family—whose greatness in Scotland, according to Buchanan, was never equalled, either before or since—was remotely of Norman extraction. William Comyn, the grand-uncle of the first Earl Buchan of the name, was a pushing ecclesiastic, who came to Scotland from Northumberland early in the twelfth century, and was made Chancellor by David I. His nephew Richard received from the Crown Prince the first heritable estate which the Comyns held in the north,—the manor of Linton Roderick in Roxburghshire. This gift was obtained about 1150, and in less than a century thereafter the possessions acquired by different members of the family—Badenoch, Athol, Monteith, Buchan—had made it the most opulent in the kingdom. Richard married

the Countess Hexeld, the granddaughter of Donald Bain; thereby becoming allied with the reigning family, and acquiring pretensions which his descendants afterwards attempted to assert. The favourite minister of Willham the Lion, he shared the misfortunes and secured the gratitude of his master. On their return from the Falaise captivity, the king rewarded him, along with other substantial gifts, by making him Justiciary, at that time probably the most influential office in the kingdom.¹ His son William, who was born in 1163, twice married. Who his first wife was is not known; his second was Margaret, in her own right Countess of Buchan. Richard and Walter, the sons of the first marriage, were both men of note in their day, and continued—the latter especially—to extend still more widely the renown and influence of the family. In 1230 Walter became Lord of Badenoch, and during the following year obtained, with the heiress, the ancient honours and vast possessions of the Menteiths. He died without issue—poisoned by his Countess, it was said—and the family of

¹ That is to say, if the Justiciarius Scotiæ was the supreme judge over the whole kingdom; but there was also a Justiciary of Lothian and a Justiciary of the kingdom north

of the Forth; and the question of their respective jurisdictions has not been settled.—See Sir J Graham Dalyell's 'Fragments of Scottish History,' p 42.

his elder brother succeeded to his estates. For many years the Lords of Badenoch were more powerful than the Kings of Scotland. Their properties extended from the Moray Firth to the Solway; they monopolised the great offices of government; they conducted the war, the police, the diplomacy of the State: at their extinction in 1306, by the dagger of Bruce, more than thirty Scottish knights of the name claimed kindred with the house. Black John of Badenoch, the father of the Red Comyn, was appointed, on the death of the Maid of Norway, one of the six guardians of the kingdom, and was undoubtedly the most influential and sagacious statesman of his age. He came forward as a claimant during the competition for the Crown,—his pretensions being founded upon his descent from the granddaughter of Donald Bain; but he quickly withdrew, and in favour, it is said, of John Bahol, whose sister he had married,—an unlucky connection for the race, as it induced them to espouse and maintain the English suzerainty, a disposition fatally confirmed by the bloody misadventure at Dumfries.

Through his second wife Marjory, William Comyn acquired the Earldom of Buchan. Marjory was the only daughter of the last of the ancient Thanes, and inherited from her father, and bestowed upon her husband, a rich and fer-

tile province. Her son, who united in his own person the offices of Constable and Justiciary, lived to an advanced age, and was succeeded by John, the third and last Comyn who retained the Earldom of Buchan. Earl Willam was thus the common ancestor of the Comyn houses of Badenoch and Buchan. At the extinction of the family during the War of Independence, the Buchan branch was represented by his grandson, the Black Earl; the Badenoch by his great-great-grandson, the Red Comyn.

Though the policy of the Comyns during the period of their supremacy has been freely criticised, it appears to be admitted, even by their critics, that during many years they represented a patriotic and national, in opposition to an English, policy. Whenever Buchan and Badenoch were out of favour at Court, it was rumoured that English intrigue had proved successful; whenever they were restored, that the English faction had been foiled. The address and sagacity of Menteith were successfully opposed to the crafty arts of the third Henry. No doubt the powerful Earl was often as dangerous to his own as to the English monarch. When in 1254 the youthful Alexander III. returned from England, Menteith insolently declined to deliver up the Castle of Edinburgh. In conjunction, moreover, with the other leaders of the faction—Buchan,

Athole, and Mar—he refused to render any account of his government during the absence of the royal minor; and when proceedings were commenced against him and his friends, he stayed them in a characteristic way. Seizing the boy-king at Kinross, he carried him a prisoner to Stirling, where he kept him until the matter was compromised. Alexander III., a proud-spirited man, probably resented this outrage; but on coming of age he was forced to pardon it, and take the Comyns again into favour “by reason of the greatness of the family.” Towards the close of the War of Independence, indeed, they became the firm allies of the English king; but this may be attributed to personal animosity against Bruce, rather than to any change in their political creed. The Red Comyn himself had taken no undistinguished part in the campaigns of Wallace; though Wynthoun says that the house “welle lowed not Wilham the Wallace”; and that at Falkirk in especial—

“For despite and gret envy
The Comyn’s kin all halyly
First left the field.”

After that great captain’s overthrow, the Red Comyn, as Regent, “took the keeping of Scotland,” and gained several victories over the English—three in one day at Roslin—on which

occasion the Prior of St Serf puts into his mouth a noble and patriotic address to his men :—

“ We are all commin of Auld lineage,
Of lords of fee and heritage,
That had nothing mair ugsome
Than to live in thraldom.”

But with the proverbial fickleness and faithlessness of his race, he continued to intrigue with either party until the dagger of the Earl of Carrick ended his indecision.

The miserable mischance at Dumfries raised against Robert Bruce the bitter and relentless hostility of the race. They pursued him like sleuth-hounds; the avenger of Comyn's blood was always upon his track. With their aid the English reduced the Castle of Kildrummie, and captured the chivalrous young brother to whom Bruce was attached by ties of peculiar tenderness. At Kingsland they routed his army, and nearly succeeded more than once in taking him prisoner. But at length the tide turned in the king's favour. Twice the Earl of Buchan met him at Inverurie. Barbour has described the meeting in his rugged chronicle,—rugged, yet instinct in every line with poetic and chivalrous fire! The Red Comyn had been slain, and the Earl had vowed vengeance :—

“ ‘ And yarnys mair, na ony thing,
Wengeance of you, Schyr King, to tak ,
For Schyr Johne the Cumyn his sak,

That quhulum in Dumfress wes sleyn.
The king said, 'Sa our Lord me sayn,
I had gret causs him for to slay.
And giff it fall that thai will fycht,
Giff thai assaile we sall defend,
Syne fall eftre quhat God will send.'

But when he came to Inverurie a deadly sickness fell upon the King. Hearing of this mishap, the Earl assembled his kinsfolk, Mowbray, Brechin, and their retainers, and marched upon the diminished encampment:—

"To the Slenauch with all thair men,
For till assaile the king then,
Was lyand in till his seckness.
This wes eftyr the Martymes,
Quhen snaw had helyt all the land"

During three days the armies looked at each other, the archers only being engaged in incidental skirmishes, until the royalists thought it prudent to retire to the hill-country. So they placed the sick King in the midst of his captains, and bearing him upon a litter, marched steadily, with resolute countenance, past the enemy, who could not muster courage to attack that serried array of desperate soldiers. The picture, as outlined by Barbour, is extremely impressive. The tumultuous crowd of eager enemies awed into sudden silence—the slow and mournful but undismayed march of the hardy veterans—the rude litter, with the stricken King stretched motion-

less upon it, sick unto death, as it seemed, yet even in his winding-sheet a great, resolute, and awe-inspiring figure.

The King and the Earl met again in the same place next spring, when the Earl was utterly routed. "This victory," Bellenden says, "wes sa plesand to King Robert that he gat his heil thairthrow." Barbour asserts that Comyn fled from the battle-field straight to the English Court, where "he deyt sone eftre syne." This account, however, is barely correct; for the Earl retreated at first into his own country, where he was followed by Edward, the King's brother. At Aiky Brae, near Old Deer, the Comyn fought his last fight. This Aiky Brae had already proved an unlucky spot for his race. The second Earl was killed there, when hunting, by a fall from his horse. And now, upon the same steep declivity, the final discomfiture of the great house took place. The Earl himself escaped to England, but his clan was almost extirpated.

The King took, indeed, signal vengeance. The Comyns were his most bitter enemies; and he probably hated them, not only on account of their unappeasable animosity, but because he had done them a cruel wrong which lay heavy on his conscience. So he wasted their country with fire and sword:—

“ He gert his men bryn all Bowchane
Fra end till end, and sparyt nane ;
And heryit then on sic maner
That eftre that weile fifty year,
Men menyt ‘ the Herschip of Bowchane ’ ”

The inhabitants were put to the sword. More than thirty of the clan were beheaded in one day, and buried together in “the grave of the headless Comyns.” The great woods of oak were burned. To this hour the desolation and nakedness of the district attest the cruel severity of the punishment that was inflicted. The name of Comyn was proscribed. Those of the race who had adhered to Bruce—like the first Buchan of Achmacoy—were forced to drop the hated surname. Their possessions were confiscated, and bestowed on the partisans of the monarchy. So complete was the destruction, that “of a name,” says a chronicle of the age, “which numbered at one time three earls and more than thirty belted knights, there remained no memorial in the land save the orisons of the monks of Deer.” Nor were these “orisons” apparently long continued; for the superior of their once-favoured abbey was present at the Parliament held at Cambuskenneth in 1314, and we learn that he affixed his seal to the celebrated ordinance then directed against the Comyns.

Thus did the good King Robert triumph over his enemies,—not unaided, as the Scottish writers

believed, by more than mortal auxiliaries. On the day of the battle of Bannockburn, "ane knicht with shinand armour" appeared to the people of Aberdeen, and discoursed to them of the great victory that was being gained over the Englishmen. So far away as Glastonbury, in remote Somerset, "the nicht afore this battle, two men of uncouth habit come to the abbot, for it was ane abbay of hospitalite, and desirit luging. The abbot ressavit them pleasandly; and quhen he had demandit thame quhat thay war, and quhare thay war passand to, thay schew, that thay war servands of God, and send be him to help the Scottis at Bannockburn. On the morrow, the abbot fand them away or evir the yetis were opnit, and thair beddis standing in the same array as they war left. It was belevit, thairfore, that thay war angellis, send, be provision of God, to defend the Scottis in thair just materis, againis the tyranny of Inglishmen."

The monkish annalists tell us that the Comyns were "addicted to religion"; and the number of religious houses they endowed in Buchan attests the magnificent patronage they bestowed upon the Church. Though the fanaticism of the saint was in those ages not unfrequently combined with the ferocity of the savage, it is unnecessary to hold that the popular judgment on the fickleness and faithlessness of this house of "vipers"

was well founded. Often arrogant, rapacious, and unscrupulous, the Comyns were yet, in the main, men of virtue, courage, and resource. Their domestic administration, at all events,—more especially in Buchan,—appears to have been wise and enlightened. When the Scottish monarchy was re-established, men looked back regretfully to the golden age that preceded the English wars. Nowhere could this sentiment have been felt more strongly than in the district which the Comyns ruled—"the land in the bend of the ocean"—where a rich, fertile, and nobly wooded plain had been turned into a sandhill and a morass. The number and magnificence of their churches and castles cannot but excite our astonishment. During their brief reign, religious houses, splendidly endowed, were erected at Foveran, at Deer, at Turriff, and other places; and every coign of vantage along that storm-beaten coast was crowned with tower and buttress. The northern pirates found the familiar landing-places vigilantly guarded, and were often attacked on their own element by the well-appointed "galleys" which, by the tenure of their lands, the northern earls were bound to maintain. The castle of Kinnedar, the feudal seat of the Earldom, commanded the fertile valley of the Deveron. Dundarg was built among the waves. The shattered but massive walls of Slains cling

to the rocks that overhang the bay where the Dane fought his last battle on Scottish ground. The light sand has drifted across the ruins of Rattray; but Inverallochy and Cairnbulg—fragments of antique strength and comeliness—still rise above the barren bents, no longer populous as of yore, and silent save for curlew and plover. All these—Kinedar, Dundarg, Slains, Rattray, Inverallochy, Cairnbulg—were strongholds of the great house, and were built, it is believed, during the century of their supremacy.¹

The War of Independence, like the Reformation, is one of the great dividing-lines in Scottish history. What the family of Comyn had been to Scotland before the war, the family of Douglas became at its close. The one house rose upon the ruins of the other. The Comyn had been supreme upon the marches; in the course of fifty years the possessions of the Douglas along the Border dales reached from the eastern to the western sea. The dalesmen ranged themselves behind the banner which bore the bloody heart ensigned with the imperial crown; and more

¹ In the valuable publications of the Spalding Club many notices of the Comyns will be found. One must take these notices for what they are worth; it is probable that in many cases they rest on nothing

better than local tradition and the gossip of the illiterate. I am glad to learn that a club which, under the guidance of Innes, Burton, Robertson, and Stuart, did so much excellent work, is about to be revived.

than once between Douglas and Stuart the Scottish crown itself hung in the balance.

The Black Douglas was of Flemish origin ; but from the twelfth century Douglasdale had belonged to the family, and they were pretty well acclimatised before William the Hardy—the father of the good Sir James—died in exile and captivity at York. The exploits of the good Sir James, from 1306, when he joined Bruce, to 1330, when he fell fighting against the Moors, with Bruce's heart at his saddle-bow, were transmitted from bard to bard until the figure of the formidable Border chief was wellnigh lost in the mist of fable. Than the wild midnight ride with two hundred horsemen right through the English camp at Stanhope Park to the tent of the English king, no more romantic and picturesque adventure is to be found in the picturesque and romantic annals of the house. The good Sir James came in for a goodly share of the estates forfeited by the Comyns and the other great nobles who sided with Edward, in which he was succeeded by his brother Archibald, the Regent of Scotland (who fell in the fatal hollow at Hali-don), and who could show perhaps a better title, for he had married Dornagilla, the daughter of Marjory Baliol, and Black John of Badenoch.¹

¹ The peerage-writers appear from unanimous among themselves, as to the descent of the to be rather uncertain, and far

The fruit of this marriage was William, and William was the first Earl Douglas,—Earl of Douglas, and also, through his wife, Earl of Mar. One atrocious and unnatural crime, for which no intelligible motive has been assigned—the slaughter of his godfather, the knight of Liddesdale, a natural son of the good Sir James, in Ettrick forest—is associated with his name. He drove the English garrison out of Teviotdale, which they had held since the rout at Durham; on more than one occasion he crossed the Border and harried the northern counties as far as York and Penrith. During the whole of his life he appears indeed to have been deeply imbued with the sentiment which Pitscottie attributed to the cadet of the house who burnt Alnwick,—*“not willing to be in an Englishman’s debt for an evil turn.”* On the death of David II. in 1371, the Earl, it is said, put forward a claim for the crown; but on his son marrying a daughter

Douglas estates on Sir James’s death. It is expected that some of these knotty points will be cleared up by Dr William Fraser in the Douglas History, on which he is understood to be engaged. [I have not yet seen ‘The Douglas Book,’ which has been privately printed for the Earl of Home since the text was written; but

I am informed that according to Dr Fraser, Sir James was succeeded by a son William, who was succeeded by his uncle Hugh, a canon of Glasgow Cathedral, who in 1342 resigned the Douglas estates in favour of his nephew William, the son of Archibald, the Regent]

of Robert II., the rivalry between Stuart and Douglas was meantime stayed. His son James, Earl of Douglas and Mar, was as stout an enemy of the English as his father had been ; it is of Earl James that Fordoun writes—*miles acerrimus et Anglis semper infestissimus*. He fell at Otterburn,—the ghastly battle fought in the moonlight, which verified the old prophecy that a dead man should gain a field. He had a brother who became Earl of Angus, and a sister, Isabel of Mar, of whom much has been written ;¹ yet on his death the earldom of Douglas passed (by special entail, it is supposed) to Archibald, called the Grim, another natural son of the good Sir James. Archibald the Grim was a man of remarkable capacity, “surpassing in civil wisdom, prowess, and hardy enterprise,” and well qualified to extend by his sagacity, and to maintain by his sword, the great position of the house. Over that sword Froissart grew more than usually animated,—“scarcely could another man raise it from the ground, yet he wielded it with ease. Such heavy blows he dealt, that, wherever it reached, it overthrew. Before him the hardest of the English army shrank.” The son of Archibald the Grim was made Duke of Touraine

¹ See an article by the present writer on “Lord Crawford and the House of Mar,” in Black-wood’s Magazine for March 1882.

and Lord of Longueville, and married Margaret, the eldest daughter of the Scottish king. His grandson, the fifth Earl, who died in 1438, left behind him two sons, William and David, "gotten upon Mauld Lindsay, dochter to the Erl of Crawford,"¹ and a daughter, the Fair Maid of Galloway, whose matrimonial misadventures form a somewhat mysterious chapter in the history of the house. The boys were young and rash, confident and inexperienced, and, spite of ten thousand Border spears, no match for the astute and crafty politician who, during the minority of James II., virtually governed Scotland. The grim banquet in the castle,—

"The black denner
Erl Douglas gat therein,"—

was a bad jest that no necessity could justify; and though Lord Livingstone, who was in league with Crichton, afterwards died on the scaffold, beseeching his friends "to tak example by him of the fragile facilities of the world," yet one of the vilest and most wanton crimes in the history of Scotland appears at the time to have passed almost without notice. It was an age of civil anarchy,—"so many widowes, bairnes, and infants seeking redress for their husbands, kin,

¹ So Pitscottie; their mother, according to Douglas, was | Lady Euphemia Graham.

and friends that war cruelly slain by wicked murders ;”—and one atrocity more or less possibly did not count. On the death of this brave and imprudent lad, the earldom passed to his grand-uncle,—a brother of the first Duke of Touraine—who is known in the history of the house as James the Gross. Peaceable and in-offensive, fat and unwieldy, the new peer was indolently willing to “let byeganes be byeganes.” He had few of the great qualities of his race ; and his contemporaries at least appear to have been chiefly impressed by his enormous size. “The 25th day of March 1443”—in the words of an old chronicle,—“Erl James Douglas deit at the castle of Abercorn, to the token, they said, that he had on him *four stane of tallow and mair*.” The sons of James the Gross,—William who was slain at Stirling by the king, James who died in extreme old age at Lindores,—were the last Earls of Douglas. The end came in 1455, when, as Sir Walter Scott says, “the sun of Douglas set in blood.”

“They laid about them at their wills and died.” Some such epitaph can still be read on the time-worn slabs in Douglasdale. The Douglas was essentially a fighting house ; and though some of the Earls were men of political capacity, they were as a rule better fitted to wield the sword than the pen. For three generations at

least the power of this formidable family was absolutely unbounded; "nae man was safe in the country unless he was either a Douglas or a Douglas's man;" their possessions, Touraine and Longueville in France, Lauder, Ettrick, Selkirk, Liddesdale, Eskdale, Annandale, Galloway, in Scotland, were princely; when William, the eighth Earl, defeated the English in the year 1448, he was Lord Lieutenant of the kingdom, and two belted earls, his brothers, fought at his side. For five years—from 1450 to 1455—the nation never knew from hour to hour whether Stuart or Douglas would win the day. It was a foul blow that was struck at Stirling; but it dissolved a confederacy that would probably have proved fatal to the crown. Had the great Border chiefs been thoroughly united, nothing indeed could have saved the reigning family; and it was fortunate for the Stuarts that one powerful branch of the clan held aloof from their kinsmen and remained fairly loyal. So invaluable indeed was the aid that Angus rendered, that it was said at the time that "the Red Douglas had put down the Black."

Upon the whole, the Red Douglas was not inferior to the Black. They fought nearly as well; and more than one of them manifested considerable management and address in the conduct of civil affairs. They were closely con-

nected with the royal family of Scotland: George, the first Earl Angus, of the Douglas blood, married Mary Stuart, daughter of Robert III.; James, the third Earl, married Johanna, daughter of James I.; Archibald, the sixth Earl, married Margaret Tudor, the sister of Henry VIII. and the widow of James IV. The Red Douglas had been rewarded for his loyalty to the throne by immense gifts of the lands which had belonged to the older house; and he obtained, in addition, the castle of Tantallon,—an impregnable fortress which (with Dunbar) commanded the road to Berwick and the whole of the eastern counties. Archibald, the fifth Earl, was the famous “Bell-the-cat.” He became the mouthpiece of the illiterate and barbarous nobles, who declined to be ruled by a king of pacific temper and cultivated tastes, and who placed James IV. on the throne from which they had driven his father. The social and material progress of Scotland during the reign of James IV. was marvellous; since the golden age of Alexander III. there had been no such period of brilliant activity and rapid progress. The infatuated folly of the vainglorious monarch, whose chivalry was as meretricious as his penitence was hollow, wrecked the fairest prospect of peace and prosperity that Scotland had enjoyed for two hundred years. Yet the king, who died at

Flodden—a man in every respect far inferior to his father—was deeply loved and sincerely mourned. “Bell-the-cat” had been his favourite minister; it was not uncharacteristic of the gay and petulant egotist, that the night before the battle he should have wantonly insulted the aged earl. Angus quitted the army in despair, but he left his retainers behind him; and next day two of his sons and two hundred gentlemen of his name fell on that disastrous field. The Master of Angus was among the slain; and *his* son (on the death of “Bell-the-cat” in 1514) succeeded to the earldom. The career of this Archibald—the sixth lord—was singular and checkered. He married Margaret Tudor; and the politic and ambitious noble was thenceforth the recognised leader of the English party in Scotland. More than once he achieved unexpected success; more than once he attained supreme power. Both the Earl and his brother Sir George were men of exceptional capacity; yet they built upon the sand, and their most skilful combinations sooner or later collapsed. The deep and rooted aversion with which they contrived to inspire the youthful king was the cause of his inveterate hostility to their house; and when, on his death, they were permitted to return to Scotland from their English exile, they returned only to find that the “English lords”

were regarded with sullen hostility by the people, and that the unguarded promises they had made to Henry could not be kept. They had meant to be loyal to their engagements; that, I think, is clear from Sadler's narrative; but the pressure of events was too strong for them. Thus it came about, that when open war was declared, Henry found that the faction in Scotland on which he had counted had failed him. He was very wroth, and his bitterness against Angus was extreme. Ralph Evers and Brian Laton overran the Merse and the valley of the Teviot. The abbey of Melrose was spoiled, and the sepulchre of the Douglas was wrecked. On Ancrum Muir Angus took his revenge. The Scottish charge was irresistible,—"the noise thereof," as Pitscottie observes, with that touch of picturesqueness which is the charm of his narrative,—“the noise thereof was as the roaring of the sea.” Henry swore and stormed, but the Douglas blood was up. “Is our good brother offended that I am a good Scotsman? Because I revenged on Ralph Evers the abusing of the tombs of my ancestors at Melrose—will he for that have my life? Little knows King Henry the skirts of Kernetable.¹ I will keep myself there from the

¹ In Calderwood's manuscript | knows King Henry the . . . and
the passage runs: “Little | the skirts of Kernetable.”

whole English army." Angus lived into another generation; Marie of Lorraine, indeed, had succeeded to the Regency before he died at his castle of Tantallon. The story of his last interview with the Queen is possibly apocryphal; but it was obviously made to suit the man—his hardy, irreverent obstinacy, and bitter tongue. The Queen was anxious to recover Tantallon, which had been a royal fortress before it was granted to the fourth Earl. Angus listened to her in silence, turning occasionally to the falcon, which he was engaged in feeding. "Will the greedy gled never be full?" he muttered, as if he spoke to the bird on his wrist; and then, bursting out, he addressed himself to the Queen,—“The castle, madam, is yours, and at your command; but, by St Bride of Douglas, I must be the captain!”

After the death of Angus, the house of Douglas, except in so far as it was represented by the Earl of Morton, did not for many years take any considerable part in public affairs. The great feudal barons, with whom Maitland had to reckon while he was in the service of Marie of Lorraine and her daughter, were men whose ancestors had been ennobled by the Stuarts, and who had succeeded by reason of marriage or forfeiture to the vast possessions of the older aristocracy. The great estates had been broken up; but there

were still a score of families whose supremacy was undisputed.

The Earl of Arran, who had been made Duke of Chatelherault when Mary was betrothed to the Dauphin, was the foremost figure. At the death of James V., only an infant a few days old stood between him and the throne. The fickleness of his convictions and the instability of his character had impaired his reputation; but his unique position, as head of the Hamiltons and heir-presumptive to the crown, still gave him great social power,—especially in the west. He had large estates in the neighbourhood of the capital itself; strong political connections in half-a-dozen counties; while from Cadzow to the Cock of Arran his will was law.

The only other political magnate in the western Lowlands was the Earl of Glencairn,—a man of a very different type. The Lollards of Kyle had been the earliest reformers; Ayrshire was the soil in which the reformed doctrines took deepest root; and Glencairn was a fit representative of the stiff and unflinching fanaticism of the Congregation. In spite of the provocations of Henry, he and his father had been loyal to the English connection; and when, with the connivance of Elizabeth and her ministers, Marie of Lorraine was deposed and the French alliance renounced, Glencairn at least had no scruples to

overcome. The Scottish nobles were the mercenaries of the Reformation; but the Western Earl was always loyal to his convictions; his honesty was unstained, his integrity untarnished, by the baser and more worldly motives which quickened the piety of Morton, Ruthven, Rothes, and the rest.

Across the Clyde lay the country of the Campbells, and the Earl of Argyll was the chief of the Campbells. He had a vast following among the Redshanks of the Atlantic seaboard,—the hardy mountaineers who dwelt along the picturesque shores of the Western lochs and rivers. His political force was at all times formidable, and when in league with the Stuarts of Athol and Lennox, or with the Grahams of Monteith and Strathern, wellnigh irresistible; but the Stuarts loved the Campbells as little as they loved the Hamiltons; and many a score which one or other would willingly have wiped out in blood, many an old grudge, many an unstanched feud, kept them apart. Argyll lived at Inverary on Loch Fyne; Monteith at Inchmahome; Athol at Blair of Athol, beyond Killiecrankie; but Lennox, who had married the Lady Margaret Douglas, had been in exile for many years, and his lands had been divided among the loyal gentry of the adjoining counties. The Lady Margaret was the lawful heir to the Earldom of

Angus; but in consequence probably of her husband's proscription, her title had been set aside, and her claim disallowed. So that a noble house, closely allied on either side with the royal family, and in whom the honours of Lennox and Angus had lawfully vested, was in the meantime landless.

The Earl of Huntly, in the colloquial language of the time, was "the goodman of the North." Three great Northern nobles—Erroll, Sutherland, and Lovat—were counted among his allies, if not among his retainers; and when he told Moray that he could restore the mass in three counties, he did not probably overrate his influence. The chief of the Gordon clan was the most opulent peer in Scotland, and Strathbogie was the palace of a prince. A man of vast experience as well as of vast possessions, he might easily have secured a great political position. But though shrewd, subtle, and adroit, he had one fatal weakness—he was not trusted. The curse of the double-minded man was upon him—Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel. Neither friend nor foe, neither Catholic Queen nor Protestant reformer, could count upon his honour; and the incurable suspicion of dishonesty, of the man faithless to his word, tainted his career. He had been taken prisoner at Pinkie Cleuch,

and by fair means or foul had afterwards escaped from his English jailor. The story of his escape has been told by an old historian ; and the graphic force and picturesqueness of the narrative impress it indelibly on the memory.—

“The Earle prepareth a supper for his keepers, whereunto they were solemnly invited, and to play at cards with him to pass away the tediousness of the night. At length (as though he had played enough at cards) he left off, bot earnestly desired his keepers to play on ; during which tyme, the earle going to the windowe and looking out, did, by secret signe, (for he culd not weill decerne anything, it wes so extrem dark over all the element) easilie understood that all things were readie for his journey. The earle then doubtful (being some tyme in good hope, and some tyme in fear) thought upon many things, which he muttered to himselff, and, at length, unadvisedlie, (as doubtfull men are wont to do), burst out into these speeches ; ‘A dark night, a wearied knight, and a wilsome way, God be the guyd!’ His keepers heiring him speking to himself, asked him what these secret speeches might signifie? To whom the earle fearing to be entrapped, answered, that these words were used as a proverb among the Scots, and first had their beginning by the old Earle of

Morton uttering the same in the middle of the night, when he lay a-dying.”¹

Of the nobles who were strong in the Eastern counties, Marischall, Ruthven, Crawford, Ogilvy, Rothes, Morton, Bothwell, and Hume, might be counted the most powerful. The Earl Marischall had established himself upon the cliffs of Dunnottar and the banks of the Ugie; Ruthven was provost of St Johnston (as Perth was then called), and from the castle of Ruthven commanded the city and river which reminded the Imperial soldier of Rome and the Tiber; Lindsay and Ogilvy were “great names” in Angus; the Leslies dwelt in Fife; Hume, Hepburn, Douglas of Dalkeith, in Lothian and the Merse. Lord Home, to whom Fast Castle belonged, was also Warden of the Eastern Marches, and chief of a warlike clan. Of the great Border nobles who held the road to England, Home, Maxwell, and Herries were the foremost,—Scott of Buccleuch and the Kerrs of Cessford and Ferniehurst being still reckoned among the untitled gentry.

Among the nobles whose lands lay in the immediate vicinity of the capital, Lord Morton was probably the most formidable. He was by birth a member of the great Douglas family; he had married his cousin Lady Elizabeth Douglas, the

¹ ‘History of the House of Sutherland,’ p. 130.

heiress of Dalkeith; and, through his influence with Marie of Lorraine, his nephew and ward, Archibald Douglas, an infant two years old, was preferred in 1558 to the Earldom of Angus. Morton was one of the latest recruits of the Congregation. It was said indeed that gratitude to the Regent accounted for his tardiness: "having obtained the Earldom of Angus for his nephew, he is unwilling to break with the Dowager;"¹ but the reason which he assigned, in a characteristic letter to Cecil, was probably the true one:

"I doubt not but your Lordship has sufficiently understood by the Laird of Lethington's report, as one that was privy to my determination, what mind I have borne to the common cause since the first enterprising thereof; as also what moved me to stay from declaring myself, before the entry of the Queen's Majesty's army; And believe you have found the occasion just as the case stood; for the French being then masters of the field where my lands lie, I might well have given up my men as a prey to their fury, but would not have advanced the cause. Since you entered at the beginning, although I was well purposed to join with the rest of the noblemen, yet seeing the matter come in consideration, I stayed until the treaty was dissolved;

¹ Sadler, 6th Nov. 1559.

and then before the assault when power was required, I joined my force with the rest and was present with them. Now, albeit nothing was craved at the Queen's Majesty, nor promised to her Highness in my name, yet I would her Majesty had that opinion of me that no man of my nation does either more esteem her Highness's liberal support granted to this afflicted realm for the present, nor yet shall be more willing to acknowledge that benefit by most humble service, than I shall ever be at the uttermost of my power, which I propose to utter by effect, when occasion shall serve. In the meantime, for the small acquaintance I had with you of old, I will be bold to require of you, that by your mean, her Majesty may understand my affection to do her service. Thus after my most hearty commendations, I wish farewell to you."¹

He had waited, in short, to see which side would win; when the entrance of an English army made the issue a certainty, he went over to the Congregation. From that time onward, however, though caring nothing for religion or its restraints, and greedy, rapacious, and dissolute beyond belief, it must be admitted that his constancy to the English alliance never wavered,—an unaccountable fidelity, which the receipt of a

¹ 24th May 1560. From the camp before Leith.

considerable pension from Queen Elizabeth does not entirely explain. The deep and enigmatical character of James Douglas perplexed his contemporaries, and Sadler's judgment was sadly at fault when he characterised a man of profound craft and daring tenacity as "simple and fearful."¹

These were the great governing families of Scotland; and among them the name of the "Prior of St Andrews" is not included. The natural son of James the Fifth became afterwards the celebrated Earl of Moray; but as yet the character and capacity of the future regent were known only to his intimates. Among these it is probable that Lethington might be counted; so much, if I am not mistaken, may be inferred from the allusions of their contemporaries. "The Lord James" had brothers and sisters—Lord Robert Stuart, Lord John Stuart, the Countess of Argyll, were among the number—but though their names occasionally occur in the records of the time, none of them attained any special distinction. If therefore we add to the list of the nobles which I have made, the names of one or two of the lesser lords—Erskine, Fleming, Seton, Livingstone—we shall have brought into one group nearly all the secular nobles

¹ Sadler, 6th Nov. 1559.

whose birth and station fitted them to participate, on one side or other, in the political and religious revolution that was at hand.

A feudal baron had many local duties to perform, and he lived much among his own people; but he was bound to attend the sittings of the Parliament, which were now commonly held in the capital.¹ The Scottish Parliament contained representatives of every estate—the greater and lesser barons, the spirituality, the commonality—who met together in a single chamber; yet it was in the Parliament House that the king's will was most authoritatively expressed, and most readily obeyed. The feudal lord was supreme at home; and it was to him—especially if he lived in the outlying counties where the law was a dead letter—a matter of little practical concern what acts the Parliament might sanction, or what duties it might enjoin. There was no power in the land capable

¹ Many of the lords—spiritual as well as temporal—began about this time to reside for a part of the year in the capital—a proof of the growing authority of the centralised executive; and some of the houses which they built for their own use were almost as strong and formidable as their castles in the country. All over Europe

the town-houses of the great nobles were buildings which, when the gates were once barred, could stand a siege,—although, of course, the prison-like palaces of the Roman and Florentine nobility bore little resemblance otherwise to the feudal mansions of Edinburgh or York.

of enforcing an obnoxious statute upon a Campbell, a Hamilton, or a Douglas. The Lords of the Articles—a Committee of Parliament virtually selected by the Crown—prepared the bills that were to be laid before the House, and the estates converted them into “Scots’ Acts” with loyal alacrity. The executive authority of the state, moreover, was largely exercised by the Privy Council, and the Privy Council was independent of the Parliament; it sat in the royal palace, and its members were selected by the sovereign. The forms of the Scottish Government were strictly “constitutional”; but there can be little doubt that, had a small standing army existed, a strong-willed ruler, by patience and address, might gradually have monopolised all the functions, executive and legislative, of the state, and exercised an authority little short of despotic. I am disposed to believe that these peculiarities of Scottish administration had not escaped the notice of William Maitland, and that a policy, which sought to increase the prerogatives of the sovereign by restricting the privileges of the nobles, would have had his approval. It is curious, at least, that, during the period when he was most trusted by Mary Stuart, within indeed two years of her return, the two greatest nobles in Scotland—Huntly and “the Duke”—

—should have been bitterly, persistently, and successfully assailed.

The high offices of state, transmitting by a sort of hereditary title from father to son, were held by the great nobles; but there were a number of posts, connected more particularly with the administration of justice in the capital, which were bestowed indifferently upon the more capable of the clergy and the lesser gentry. The seats upon the bench were filled by an equal number of lay and clerical members; the functionaries attached to the civil and consistorial tribunals belonged to the legal order which the institution of a Supreme Court had called into existence; the Advocate, the Justice-Clerk, the Treasurer, the Secretary, were as a rule personally attached to the sovereign. At the time when young Lethington first went to Edinburgh, a considerable share of the real government of the nation was in the hands of the "officials"; and it was by virtue of holding one or other of these offices (and thus only indeed) that an ambitious politician like Maitland, not belonging to the great governing families, could look for early advancement.

CHAPTER FOUR.

POLITICS AND RELIGION.

FROM the brief survey of Scottish literature which I have attempted to give in a previous chapter, it sufficiently appeared that long before William Matland was born, the great and independent tribes which occupied the country to the north of the river Tweed had been brought into organic union. We are apt to misjudge and misunderstand the forces that form a nation. There is nothing more certain, however, than the proposition which most students of history are now prepared to accept,—that a community does not rise to any true corporate life until, so to speak, it has been “baptised in fire.” The iron must be red-hot before it will fuse; and a severe education, a hard experience, is needed to weld a nation together. By common sufferings and by common triumphs the Scots had bought the right to be a people. Their apprenticeship had been

served in a rough school; but it had taught them the lesson which it was designed to teach. Cohesion had been given to the national life. A true identity had been established. Patriotism had become a virtue. A vivid sense of their essential unity pervaded the whole society. They were "Scots,"—high and low, rich and poor, peer and peasant, members of the same family. The feeling had grown stronger and deeper during centuries of strenuous conflict with a foe whose resources were vastly superior. The constant strain had never been relaxed; no breathing-space in which to recruit their strength had been given them; year after year the miserable and exhausting conflict had been renewed.

Up to the thirteenth century the conduct of the English kings was fairly justifiable. The advantages of union to either people could not be overrated. It was obviously a matter of the first importance that the whole island, from John o' Groat's to the Land's End, should be under one ruler. The existence of an alien and hostile people across the Border was a constant menace; and the English were naturally inclined to maintain, by fair argument or foul, that neither in law nor in fact did such a people exist. But the War of Independence should have opened their eyes. Edward and his successors continued to insist on a technical plea;

they would not recognise the unquestionable fact that, whatever might have been the rights and wrongs of the past, Scotland was now a separate kingdom, and the Scots a distinct people. Whoever has read the letter which the Scottish nobles addressed to the Pope in 1317, must acknowledge that the English pretensions had ceased to be tenable, and, in ceasing to be tenable, had become criminal and foolish. That letter—written in uncouth monkish Latin, which is yet unable to chill the fire and fervour of its patriotism—establishes beyond the shadow of doubt that, before the close of the thirteenth century, Scottish nationality was an accomplished fact: “From these evils innumerable, by the help of Him who, after wounding, heals and restores to health, we were freed by our most gallant Prince, King, and Lord, our Lord Robert, who, to rescue his people and heritage from the hands of enemies, like a later Macabeus or Joshua, endured toil and weariness, hunger and danger, with cheerful mind; to whom (as to him by whom deliverance has been wrought for our people) we, for the defence of our liberty, are bound, both by right and by his deserts, and are determined in all things to adhere; but if he were to desist from what he has begun, wishing to subject us and our kingdom to the King of England

and the English, we would immediately expel him as an enemy, and the subverter of his own rights and ours, and make another king who should be able to defend us. For so long as a hundred remain alive, we never will, in any degree, be subject to the dominion of the English. Since not for glory, riches, or honour, we fight, but for liberty only, which no good man loses but with his life.”¹

The English kings never renounced the claim. It was seriously insisted on by Henry VIII. after the rout at Solway Moss; it was a weapon that Cecil kept in reserve, and which he liked to play with (if only in the closet) when occasion served. For the load of woes of which it was the origin the English kings are solely responsible. Had they been content to waive a claim which they could not enforce, the bitter hostility between the “auld enemies” would have gradually abated. The memory of old wrongs could not have kept asunder those whom nature had joined, and three centuries of anarchy would have been wiped out as with a sponge. Scottish patriotism, no doubt, was fanned into a fiercer flame; but in all other respects the fruit was evil,—apples of Sodom, grapes of Gomorrah. The character of the na-

¹ Non enim propter gloriam diuicias aut honores pugnamus, sed propter libertatem solum- | modo quam Nemo bonus nisi simul cum vita amittit.

tion deteriorated. It may be said without exaggeration that, before the struggle had ended, the only organised life left in Scotland was the intense patriotic feeling. All the other ligaments that unite society were broken. The land was turned into a cock-pit, and the nation into an army, which was decimated as systematically as soldiers on active service are decimated. Hardly a man died in his bed. The great nobles, if they were not executed on the scaffold, fell on the battlefield. One generation followed another,—Stuart, Douglas, Hamilton, Home, Scott, dying in turn a violent death. It is a chronicle of blood,—two hundred years of unprofitable and wicked slaughter. The monotony of the story indeed is as wearisome as its vileness. Patriotism itself cannot touch with a semblance of nobleness the raids of Border ruffians; and the chivalry of Otterburn is but a fiction of the poet. Like a pack of the wild animals that were still found in their forests, the “gaunt and hungry nobles” of Scotland hung upon the flanks of their richer neighbours,—turning fiercely at intervals to worry one another. The memorable words of Hobbes may be applied indeed with eminent fitness to the Scottish anarchy of which Edward was the author: “In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and consequently no culture

of the earth ; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea ; no commodious building ; no account of time ; no arts ; no letters ; no society ; and, which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death ; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”¹

When James the Fourth was on the throne, a truce was concluded which lasted for several years. The progress in art and letters, in agriculture and commerce, during this comparatively brief pause, was astonishing. But for the vain-glorious folly of the King, it might have been the beginning of the end. The Stuarts, from first to last, were an unfortunate—in some respects an unaccountably unfortunate—race. Brave, frank, witty, versatile, energetic, they were ready, with a sort of plebeian audacity, to welcome good or evil fortune. They had little pride of station,—they were men and women who laughed with the keenest zest over the humours of the market-place, and who did not care to don the mask which custom prescribes when a king mixes with the crowd. Under immense difficulties—in a light, inconsequent, irrelevant style—they did a good deal for Scotland. For a few years in the maturity of his

¹ *Leviathan*, chap. xiii.

powers, each of the Jameses had been King and Ruler: but they were shortlived; and during a succession of protracted minorities the anarchical aristocracy recovered the power of which it had been temporarily shorn.¹ This was an accident; but the Stuart character was itself at fault. Somewhere in the metal there was a flaw. Infirm of temper, they could not bear a protracted strain; impatient of opposition, they could not play a waiting game. To form a far-reaching design, to mature it in silence, and to cling to it to the end, was a line of policy which a Stuart might approve in his heart, but which he could not follow. They were at once obstinate and facile,—never more so than when James, in spite of warning and portent, cast away his crown upon the field of Flodden.

Flodden was fought in 1513, and during the forty intervening years little had been done by English statesmen to soothe the jealous susceptibilities of the northern people, or to smooth the way to union. The old enemies continued to hate each other with the old cordiality. But the Scots now stood mainly on the defensive,—the lesson which they had been taught at Flod-

¹ Robert Birrel, an Edinburgh burgess, begins his "Diarey" with these words,—“There hes been in this kingdom of Scot-

land ane hundred and fyve kings, of whilk there wes slaine fyftie-sex.”

den not having been forgotten. Once—on the death of James the Fifth—it appeared possible that a lasting peace might be cemented; but the chance passed away, and the “tragedies” that followed drove the nation wild. The customary atrocities were renewed with fresh vigour. No English king, since Edward, had been hated as Henry came to be hated.

It has been urged, indeed, that Henry’s “rough wooing” was justified by the mendacity and treachery of the Scots. An attentive study of Sadler’s despatches to the English court, and other contemporary records, tends, I think, to qualify this judgment.

Sadler had been sent to bring about the marriage between the infant Mary and the youthful Edward, which was designed to secure a definite and lasting union. It was the early spring of 1543; James the Fifth had died of a broken heart at Falkland,—the favourite hunting-seat of royalty, where was that “broad-horned species of stags” which Buchanan describes,—on the 14th of the previous December; the Douglasses, Angus and his brother Sir George, had returned from their long exile, along with the Lords who had been taken at Solway Moss; the widowed Queen with her infant daughter was at Linlithgow; the great Cardinal, who had been foiled in his attempt to secure the office which James

had probably intended that he should fill, was under a cloud ; and Arran—the weak and facile Hamilton, “altered by every man’s flattery and fair speech”—was Governor of the kingdom. At the moment the balance inclined to England ; Sadler was sanguine ; but it soon became clear that the conditions formulated by Henry—proceeding upon the implied claim of superiority which the Scots had persistently and obstinately denied—were entirely inadmissible, and would never be conceded by the people.

In the garden at Holyrood Sadler found the Governor, who, after a brief interview, bade Sir George Douglas convey him to his lodging. Sir George—one of the “English pensioners,” as Bothwell offensively called them—was friendly, but frank. He declared that the Estates would not consent to send the infant Mary to England, and he pled for patient delay and gentle dealing. “If there be any motion now to take the Governor from his state, and to bring the government of this realm to the King of England, I assure you it is impossible to be done at this time. For,” he continued, “there is not so little a boy but he will hurl stones against it, and the wives will handle their distaffs, and the commons universally will rather die in it, yea, and many noblemen and all the clergy be fully against it.” Violent measures would drive the

Scots into the arms of France; whereas with fair means the marriage might be ultimately brought about.

That was Sir George's opinion, and Angus was much influenced by Sir George,—“we shall advise with our brother,” being his usual answer. A few days afterwards Angus and Glencairn excused themselves for not pressing Henry's claim that the government should be entrusted to him (which when in England they had admittedly undertaken to promote), on the ground that, before they arrived, a Regent had been appointed by the Estates. “There was no doubt, however, but that your Majesty once having the interest in the young queen, all the rest of your desires would follow.” Glencairn sent a letter to the same effect, which, “being written with his own hand, and therefore not legible,” Sadler was forced to copy.

The negotiations dragged on through the summer,—Sadler using all his influence with Henry to induce him to moderate his demands. “All your Majesty's purposes may be wrought in time without rigour”—if he would only be patient; and Lord Maxwell—whose daughter Angus had married—was equally urgent,—“fair and gentle means are the best and most godly way.” “The Lords will not consent to have an English Council in Scotland; but if your Ma-

jesty will somewhat relent in your demands, all may yet be well."

Henry's position in the negotiations was thus perfectly plain. Mary, now an infant a few months old, was to be taken to England, where she was to remain in the custody of the King till the marriage could be solemnised. In the mean time the government of the country was to be entrusted to Henry; an English council was to be installed at Holyrood; English soldiers were to garrison the castle. Angus must indeed have forgotten the history of his house, if he fancied for a moment that such an abject capitulation would be ratified by his countrymen.

As time passed on the clouds gathered. Arran had been well affected to the English Protestants; he had issued a proclamation on 19th March, making it lawful to read the Bible in the mother-tongue; he had made Henry Balnaves his secretary ("I have had mickle cumber among the kirkmen for his sake," he told the ambassador); he had hated the Cardinal, and would have been well pleased if the Douglas plot to carry him to Tantallon had succeeded. When Sadler suggested that the great churchman should be kidnapped and sent to England, the Governor was immensely tickled by the proposal. "Hereat he laughed, and said, 'The Cardinal had lever go into hell!'" But

Arran, who was, as Marie of Lorraine truly said, "the most inconstant man in the world, for whatsoever he determineth to-day he changeth to-morrow," began to waver. His tone changed. He continued to protest his attachment to Henry, "swearing many great oaths as *wounds* and *sides* (as indeed he is a good swearer)"; and he even persuaded the Estates to ratify an emasculated treaty, "at the high mass, solemnly sung with shalms and sackbuts in the abbey church of the Holyrood House." But the tide was too strong for him. The Cardinal had escaped to St Andrews. "Then he told me, swearing a great oath, that the Cardinal's money had corrupted Lord Seton." Civil war seemed imminent,—there will be a wild time, said Angus, "every man preparing jacks and spears." But it soon became clear that, though some of the Lords were in Henry's pay, the Commons and the kirkmen, as well as a great party of the nobles, went with the Cardinal. The clergy had refused to perform the offices of the church so long as Beaton was in prison; and if a war broke out, "they will give their own and the church plate,—chalices, crosses, censers." The common people, moreover, began to murmur against Arran as a heretic and an Englishman who had sold the realm to Henry. Angus and the Border Lords

were even more unpopular. "They were commonly hated here for your Majesty's sake, and such ballads and songs made of them that they have been corrupted by the English angels." Sadler clearly perceived the gathering of the storm. The struggle between "the heretics and the English Lords" on the one side, and "the scribes and pharisees" on the other, would be decided by "the neutrals," who were already going over to the stronger faction; and the Governor was going with them. Then the storm burst. "The estate of things here is so perplexed, and such malicious and despiteful people, I think, live not in this world as is the common people of this realm, specially towards Englishmen." "I think never man had to do with such people." Henry in his anger imprudently confiscated the Scottish ships in English ports, and would only restore them on conditions which, "making them traitors to their own country," the Scots indignantly rejected. For some days the ambassador was not safe; he had been in great danger, he wrote to Henry; the Douglasses were unable to protect him,—their friends forsaking them because they were "English," and even their own servants "not to be trusted in such a quarrel." At last he was carried secretly to Tantallon, from whence he crossed the Border.

Henry's passion boiled over. He held that the Cardinal had foiled him; and it was against the Cardinal that he was most bitter. "It may like your lordship to understand," Secretary Paget wrote to Hertford, who was already—March 11, 1543—on his way to Scotland, "the King's Majesty's opinion is that it shall be well done for such as make raids into Scotland to have written upon the church-door, or some other notable place within all such towns or states, these or such other like words: '*You may thank your Cardinal for this; for if he had not been you might have been in quiet and rest; for the contrary whereof he hath travelled as much as can be to bring you to sorrow and trouble.*'"

While it is quite true, therefore, that the Cardinal and the Queen-mother were all along secretly opposed to the English marriage (which indeed was not cordially accepted by any powerful party in Scotland), it cannot be denied that Henry's inordinate pretensions gave his enemies the pretext they desired, and that his impolitic violence fanned the smouldering flame into a fierce conflagration. The cruelties that were perpetrated by the English captains, the ruth and ruin that followed the track of their armies, had never been excelled in any of the raids that had so often desolated the Border homesteads. The Scots were exasperated beyond measure.

Peaceful and orderly progress was paralysed. Union was delayed for half a century. The barest record of these atrocities suffices to show that the statesman who, in the middle of the sixteenth century, could look forward with confidence to a peaceful union of the crowns, must have been immensely sagacious or singularly sanguine.¹

The burning of the capital was the first argument that Henry used. There was no need for a declaration of war. No fastidious scruples required to be consulted. On a fine Sunday in the beginning of May, the citizens saw from the Castle-hill and other "eminent places" that the Firth was dotted over with the white sails of the English ships. There was no fear of invasion, however, and the Governor and the Cardinal went quietly to bed. "Upon Wednes-

¹ Powerful and bitter expression is given to these sentiments in the 'Complaynt of Scotland,' which was written about 1548. For twelve hundred years, we are assured, the English have been the "auld mortal enemies" of the Scot. The Scottish lords who sell themselves for English gold are sternly denounced, and even the clergy are exhorted to take the field against the cruel invasion of that "false seed," that "unbelieving generation,"

led by a man bloodier than Nero or Caligula. The writer, whoever he may have been, appeals to universal Christendom to denounce as "God's rebels" the people who, by their infidelity and sacrilege, their tyranny, cruelty, and violent usurpation of other princes' dominions, without title or provocation, have shown that they are rather "Saracens" than citizens of the Christian commonwealth

day" — May 7, 1544 — "the English marched towards Edinburgh; first spoiled and then burnt the town and the palace of Holyrood house. There were few towns and villages within seven miles of Edinburgh which were not spoiled and burnt. Thereafter they spoiled and burnt Leith. When they had consumed both the towns, they loaded the ships with the spoils." This is the Scottish account of the exploit; an Englishman who accompanied the expedition contributes some characteristic touches: "Finally it was determined by the said Lord Lieutenant utterly to rinate the town with fire. We continued burning all that day, and the two days next ensuing continually, so that neither within the walls nor in the suburbs was left any one house unbrent. Also we burnt the Abbey called Holy Rodehouse, and the palace adjoining to the same. In the mean time, there came unto us four thousand of our light horsemen, who did such exploits in riding and devastating the country, that within seven miles every way of Edinburgh they left neither peel, village, nor house, nor stacks of corn standing unbrent. After these exploits done at Edinburgh, and all the country thereabouts devastated, the king's lieutenant, thinking the Scots not to be condignly punished, determined not to return without doing them more displeasure. . . . To

give them better occasion to show themselves in the field against us, we left neither peel, village, town, nor house, in our way homewards, unburnt. . . . The same day we burnt a fair toun called Haddington, with a great nunnery and a house of Friars. That night they looked for us to have burnt the town of Dunbar, which we deferred till the morning, when those within it were newly gone to their beds; *and in their first sleeps, closed in with fire, men, women, and children were suffocated and burnt.*"¹ This was a fair beginning; but—"as God would be known to favour our master's cause"—it was not enough, or nearly enough. A "bloody ledger" exists, wherein the "exploits done upon the Scots" between July and November of the same year are duly entered. From this it appears that 192 towns, towers, and parish churches had been destroyed; 403 Scots had been killed, and 816 taken prisoner; while 10,380 cattle, 12,492 sheep, 1296 nags and geldings, had been captured and carried off. Next year the wretched Borderers were again scourged. Between the 8th and the 23d of September, 7 monasteries, 16 castles, 5 market-towns, 243 villages, 13 mills, 3 hospitals, were utterly wrecked—"cast

¹ The Late Expedition in Scotland, the yere of our Lorde God, 1544.

down, burnt, and rased"—to slake Henry's thirst for revenge. The Abbeys of Kelso, Dryburgh, Melrose, Jedworth, Eccles, were rased and cast down—the towns were burnt. The King's instructions were religiously respected; and even after his death, the carnage went on with unabated zest and spirit. Pinkie Cleuch was fought on the "Black Saturday" of September 1547. The injury inflicted on Scotland during these eight or nine years was immense; but Henry profited not at all. Before the war was finished Mary had been betrothed to the Dauphin, and the English garrisons had been driven across the Tweed.

These were the scenes which Maitland witnessed as a lad; his youth was passed among people whose fathers and brothers had been slaughtered, whose homesteads had been gutted, by "the auld enemy." Maitland did not wear his heart on his sleeve: he delighted in the "mockage" which concealed his serious convictions; he had an immense contempt for exaggerated sentiment and fanatical excess. Yet no truer patriot was then living,—no Scotsman who was prouder of Scotland. Not, if *he* could help it, should the long heroic struggle for freedom, for independence, prove fruitless at the last. On the other hand, he saw with eminent directness, with an almost poetic simplicity of insight, of divina-

tion, that a policy of separation was becoming more hopeless, more impossible, every day. Irresistible forces were drawing the nations together. The stars in their courses were fighting for union. This was the political puzzle which English and Scottish statesmen were set to solve. How and on what terms could the old enemies be united? If the national jealousies were to be permanently allayed, if the old sores were to be healed, there must be no arrogant assumptions on the one side, no sense of humiliation on the other. The problem would probably have proved insoluble had it been left to work itself out through political forces alone. But in the sixteenth century the bands of patriotism were loosed by a stronger passion. In the reviving warmth of the spiritual life the old animosities died out, the ancient grudges were forgotten. Religion, for once, brought peace—not a sword.

To determine whether the policy of Maitland or the policy of Knox was most in harmony with the principles of the Reformers, it will be necessary hereafter to treat very fully of the circumstances attending the Reformation of religion in Scotland. In the mean time, I need only bring together in the briefest possible survey the events which led up to the final rupture between the Queen and the Catholic Church on the one hand, and the Lords of the Congregation

on the other. The Reformation as a whole—the Reformation as the wave of change that in the sixteenth century swept across Catholic Europe—lies outside the scope of this survey, either now or later; yet it is true, I may say in passing, that the ideas and feelings which the Reformation expressed were everywhere substantially the same. The Reformation, when resolved into its simplest elements, was a protest against the practice, as well as against the doctrine, of the papacy. The reviving spiritual life was alienated by the doctrinal materialism of Rome; the reviving moral life was shocked by its cynical licentiousness. In Germany the insurrection may be said to have been in great measure the fruit of a profound spiritual excitement; in England it was mainly due to the political indignation which the corruptions of the monastic orders had roused; in Scotland both forces worked with nearly equal energy. But these subjective national peculiarities did not affect the vital unity of the movement. To throw the imagination back into that troubled age; to watch the manifestations of the strange new spirit which was moving with an irresistible impulse all the northern peoples, from the rude Prussian amber-fisher on the Baltic Sea to the polished courtiers and sharp logicians of Paris, Rotterdam, and Geneva; to discriminate between the idioms

which national habit, idiosyncrasy, and temperament impressed upon it ; to appreciate the social changes in the life of Europe which it effected ; to track its progress,—in one nation dying out after a brief volcanic life ; in another quenched in martyr blood ; in another clinging to the cliffs and keeping a pure flame alight in rough mountain hearts ; in another wisely assimilated by prince and prelate, permitted to work out its mission unmolested, and to mould through calm and storm the policy of cabinets and the history of an empire,—this is a task which has never yet, in our own country at least, been adequately discharged,—a labour, indeed, of which few are capable. We have “bits,” as an artist would say, of rare excellence ; but the finished picture has not yet been painted. The features of the representative leaders,—the genial disposition and broad sympathies of Luther, his manliness, his simple affectionateness, the bluntness and heartiness of his temper, the rude strength and hilarious riot of his humour ; the wrapt, austere, and passionless Calvin, his logical directness and naked simplicity of intellect, his legislative capacity, and the great practical and administrative genius which cast the stormy forces of the Revolution into a compact and symmetrical mould ; the caustic irony and benevolent piety of Latimer ; the humour, the narrowness, the bitter-

ness, and the harsh sense of Knox,—have been portrayed with admirable fairness by one to whom many of the best and most attractive traits of the Reformers had been transmitted—the lamented Principal of the University of St Andrews; and if another writer, of kindred yet contrasted gifts, had completed that history of the empire under Charles the Fifth which he had begun, but from which he was unhappily diverted by other duties, the main incidents of a most momentous movement would have been brought visibly before us,—marshalled in brilliant procession by the latest master of English prose.

It is with the city of St Andrews that the ecclesiastical history of Scotland, prior to the Reformation, is most intimately associated.

What St Andrews was when Marie of Lorraine landed there in 1537, or what it was a few years later, when William Maitland crossed the Firth to become a scholar in the “humanities”—so wide and sweeping are the changes it has undergone—we can with difficulty conjecture. Even within the memory of men now living it has altered much. St Andrews, in the days of their boyhood, was a truly academic city—a dark, sombre, ruinous, mildewed, ill-lighted, badly-paved, old-fashioned, old-mannered, secluded place. Then came the era of the utilitarian reformers, who destroyed its scholastic repose, and

wiped away its classic dust. But in that earlier and darker age to which memory not unwillingly returns, a few noble fragments of ancient ruin which had resisted the fury of the Knoxian mob,—the massive walls of a feudal castle, the great tower of St Rule, the lovely windows and arches of the Cathedral,—rose above an old-fashioned street, not inconveniently crowded with old-fashioned houses, in which old-fashioned professors and old-fashioned ladies looked after keen-eyed, threadbare students, who here, in red and ragged gowns, cultivated the Muses, like the early Edinburgh Reviewers, upon a little oatmeal. Very kindly and homely was the life they led,—a life through which the shrill sea-wind blew healthfully, and to which the daily round of “golf” on the Links, and the evening rubber of long whist in the parlour, added the keen zest of physical and intellectual excitement. Death has swept them all clean away,—wonderful old Scotch ladies, wonderful old Scotch professors; and new streets, new terraces, new men, new manners, have transformed the modern city—during the summer months at least—into a fashionable loitering-place for the lawyers of Edinburgh and the traders of Dundee. But go to it during winter or early spring—before the college session is over, before the students in their red gowns have deserted the streets,

before the sociable academic society has taken flight, before the east wind has abated, before the hoarse complaints of a sea often vexed by storm are silenced, before the snow has melted away from the distant Angus range,—and we may even to-day understand the bleak charm that thirty or forty or fifty years ago endeared this sea-girt seat of early learning and piety—this severe mother of the intellectual Graces, *Mater sæva Cupidinum*—to the most thoughtless of her sons.

The decline of St Andrews began with the Reformation: less than a hundred years thereafter we find the magistrates complaining of its decaying trade, its diminished shipping, its deserted streets, its impoverished citizens. It had been associated for centuries with the elaborate ritual and splendid pageantries of the Catholic Church; when the Church fell, it dragged the city along with it. Some slight and imperfect notion of the vicissitudes it has experienced may be obtained by whoever visits its storm-beaten pier. When he finds only a small coaster or two moored to the quay, and half-a-dozen deep-sea fishing-boats drawn up on the beach, he will be inclined to question the statistics of the sixteenth-century historian, who informs him that during the great annual fair—the Senzie Fair held in the grounds of the Priory during

April—three hundred vessels from France, Flanders, and the Baltic entered its famous port.

St Andrews was probably at its best about the middle of the sixteenth century. This venerable temple of the Christian faith had not been built in a day. It was as old as—nay, older than—the Scottish monarchy. The promontory of Muckross is described in our earliest annals as one of the favourite haunts of the wild boar. Here, in “old unhappy far-off times,” not many years after the death of our Lord, came a great Christian missionary, bearing with him (reverently, in a silver casket) “three of the fingers and three of the toes” of a yet greater apostle. Here he founded a Christian church, and converted to the true faith “that bloody, savage, and barbarous people, the Pights.” Here a long line of saints and bishops, from Adrian to Arthur Ross, lived and died, and were buried in sumptuous tombs which those humble shepherds took care to provide for themselves. Here, on a barren promontory, rose an exquisite shrine (two hundred years they took to build it), whose burnished copper roof was seen miles off by the hardy mariners of France and Flanders who ploughed the northern seas. Here grey friars and black friars grew fat and sleek upon the prudent piety of Scottish kings; here high-bred and high-born legates and cardinals dispensed a

princely hospitality; here queens feasted, and martyrs suffered, and the fingers and toes of the Saint continued to work miraculous cures till a comparatively recent period.

The Priory had been built when Alexander III. was king. The Cathedral begun by Arnold in 1159 was finished by Lamberton in 1318.¹ The castle was about the same age as the Cathedral, though part of it, erected by Walter Trail, must have been of somewhat later date. The Convent of the Black Friars was founded in 1274, and the Convent of Grey Friars in 1448. The University was constituted by Papal Bull in 1410 (thirteen doctors of divinity, eight doctors of laws, with doctors learned in logic, rhetoric, and philosophy, composed its teaching staff); but St Mary's, the youngest of the colleges and the

¹ Lamberton was the most munificent of its Bishops—"a prelate wise, active, and a great benefactor to the abbey. The buildings whereof now we only behold the ruins were erected upon his charges. He finished the cathedral church, which had been many years a-building, and dedicated the same with great solemnity in the year 1318. He adorned the chapter-house with curious seats and ceiling; furnished the canons with precious vestments for the

daily service; stored their library with books; gave unto the prior and convent, the same very day, the churches of Dairsay and Abercromby; and dying at last in the prior's chamber within the monastery, was buried in the new church, on the north side of the high altar, in the year 1328."—(Spottiswoode, i. 107) It will be observed from this extract that when Spottiswoode wrote the ecclesiastical buildings were spoken of as "ruins."

last good work of the elder Beaton,—St Mary's (*Quo desiderio veteres revocavit amores*!) was not begun till 1538. The magnificent wall, with its turrets for sharpshooters and its niches for saints, which encloses the priory and the cloisters, was the work of Prior John Hepburn in 1516. Most of the religious buildings were of exquisite finish and noble design; while over all—high over all—rose the sombre square tower of St Rule, a building of unknown antiquity.

The citizens of this great seat of learning and piety had been permitted for many generations to carry on their beneficent work unmolested. The peaceful labours of its doctors and divines had seldom been interrupted by the anarchy and turbulence which elsewhere prevailed in Scotland. It was distant from the Borders, where the religious houses were periodically "harried," and from the mountain-passes, through which the Redshanks occasionally issued to spoil the northern monasteries. From the earliest ages its Bishop had been the "primus," for a hundred years its Archbishop had been the metropolitan, of Scotland. In a great cathedral city Catholicism was to be seen at its best and at its worst; but whatever covert scandals might exist, the spirit of dissent, of discontent, of criticism, had failed to make itself felt. Until well on in the sixteenth century no one appeared to

suspect that the magnificent vitality of the Catholic Church had been seriously shaken. Yet within fifty years, to vary the metaphor, the whole fabric was in ruins.

The rift was at first barely perceptible. Up to the close of the reign of James V. in 1542, it cannot be said that any new scheme of theological dogma had been formulated by those who were dissatisfied with the Church of Rome. The Lollards who came from Kyle, "that receptacle of the saints of old," were very outspoken critics of the established religion; but the main articles of their simple protest, dealing with questions of conduct rather than of doctrine, compare very favourably with the metaphysical inquisitiveness and logical hair-splitting which disfigure the Confessions of the later Reformers. John Reseby, a follower of Wyclif, had been "justified" at St Andrews in 1408; and the Bohemian Paul Craw, a disciple of Huss, twenty-five years afterwards. Knox, who inclined to hold with characteristic narrowness that there was no religion in Scotland prior to the Reformation, is yet constrained to admit, in virtue of that earlier "testimony," that even in the time of greatest darkness God had dealt mercifully with the realm—"retaining within it some spunk of His light."

In 1528 Patrick Hamilton,—“many ways infamed with heresy, disputing, holding, and main-

taining divers heresies of Martin Luther and his followers,”—was burnt before “the auld College.” Knox tells us that in all St Andrews at that time there was none found who did not begin to inquire, *Whairfor was Maister Patrik Hamilton brunt?* Soon afterwards Henry Forrest “suffered death for his faithful testimony to the truth,” being “burnt at the North Church stile of the Abbey Church,” so that the heretics of Angus—across the water—might see the fire, and possibly mend their ways. John Lindsay—a prudent friend of the Archbishop—had been anxious, on the other hand, that the execution should be conducted in private, “for the reik of Master Patrik Hamilton,” he said, “had infected as many as it blew upon.” In 1534 the “dumb dogs” “renewed their battle against Jesus Christ”; and Norman Gourlay and another were hanged and burnt at the “Rood of Greenside”—somewhere upon the Calton Hill of Edinburgh, I presume—“to the intent that the inhabitants of Fife, seeing the fire, might be stricken with terror and fear.” As an Act was passed about the same time against throwing down of images and invading of abbeys, symptoms of the iconoclastic spirit must have already declared themselves. We learn from a contemporary writer that in 1543 “there was ane great heresie in Dundie; thair they destroyit the kirkis, and

wald have destroyit Aberbrothok," had it not been for Lord Ogilvy;¹ and the coarse and truculent scepticism of a later age was vigorously parodied by the Perth humourists, who were indicted for "nailing two ram's-horns on St Francis's head, and putting of a cow's tail to his rump."

It is obvious from these notices that during the reign of James, the tide of the Reformation in Scotland had begun to flow. There was as yet no very widespread popular feeling on the subject; it had not become a "burning question," except in the earlier sense of the words; but a good many men within the Church itself were beginning to perceive that the position had become untenable; and it is clear that in Fife and Angus at least, many "secret professors" were to be found. The English envoy, who was in Scotland during 1540, draws a vivid picture of the state of parties at Holyrood. He had been instructed to converse confidentially with the King on the conduct of ecclesiastical affairs. The greater monasteries were being dissolved in England, and Henry wished his Scotch nephew to take a leaf out of his book. James, however, who seems to have agreed with the old gentlewoman of Montrose that swearing was a "great

¹ Diurnal of Occurrents.

aff-set" to conversation ("By my troth," quoth he—"No, on my soul," quoth he—"By God," quoth he—emphasise nearly every sentence of the lively report transmitted to the English Court), was not to be persuaded. There were two laws, he said, spiritual and temporal; he did his duty as regarded the one—the other he committed to the Pope and his ministers. "He spoke very softly," Sadler adds significantly, "the Cardinal being present." "And in good faith," James continued, "I cannot take the King's advice; it is against reason and God's law to put down those abbeys and religious houses which have stood these many years, and God's service maintained and kept in the same." And he shrewdly concluded,—“Besides, the kirkmen will give me all I want.” Sadler then tried another tack,—denouncing the monks as indolent, effeminate, and unchaste. "Oh," quoth the King, "God forbid that if a few be not good, for them all the rest shall be destroyed. Though some be not, there be a great many good, and the good may be suffered, and the evil must be reformed; as ye shall hear," quoth he, "that I shall help to see it redressed in Scotland by God's grace, if I brook life." Sadler would have had them weeded out by the root; but the King was firm. "I am sure my uncle will not desire me to do otherwise than my conscience serveth."

The envoy, in a subsequent letter, was forced to admit that in spite of ecclesiastical scandals, and the progress of "Christ's word and doctrine" among the laity, the churchmen were still the only capable persons in the country to whom the government could be prudently entrusted. He had met "a great number of noblemen and gentlemen that be well given to the verity of Christ's word and doctrine, but the noblemen be young. I see none among them that hath any such agility of wit, gravity, learning, and experience to take in hand the direction of things. So that the King is of force driven to use the bishops and clergy as ministers of the realm. They be the men of wit and policy; they be never out of the King's ear—who giveth small care to his affairs, being given to much pleasure and pastime."¹

The attitude of James was upon the whole reasonable; and, but for the "trajedies" that followed his death, a prudent and statesmanlike measure of reform would probably have been obtained without undue delay. The Scots were

¹ Sadler was a layman who understood the language of diplomacy, whereas Barlow, Henry's chaplain, was much more outspoken and naive. While Sadler admitted that the Catholic Bishops who held the

great offices of state discharged their duties with discretion and address, Barlow roundly declared that the Scottish king was surrounded "by the Pope's pestilent creatures and very limbs of the devil."

partly responsible, no doubt; but the burden of blame does not rest on them. It was the frantic and irrational violence of Henry VIII. that made Reformation in Scotland impossible for wellnigh twenty years.

James Beaton, the Archbishop of St Andrews, died in 1539. He had had a checkered experience. He was the churchman whose conscience "clattered" at the conference which led to *Cleanse-the-Causey*. He had ventured to beard the Douglas, and Douglas had proved the stronger. The Archbishop was forced to hide himself: disguised as a shepherd, he had herded sheep on Bogan-knowe, among the wilds of Angus. He was succeeded in the primacy by his nephew. James Beaton was a churchman of fairly average intelligence; but David Beaton was the foremost statesman of his time. Had it not been for the implacable animosity of Knox, the youthful irregularities of the great Cardinal might possibly have been forgotten. The ghastly caricature of his last night in this world rests, so far as I am aware, on unauthenticated rumour; and there is little in his character and career to justify the bitter invective of the Reformer against "the bloody butcher" of the saints of God. Beaton was a secular statesman as well as an anointed bishop; and it is probable that the policy he adopted when he brought Wishart

to the scaffold was directed as much against sedition as against heresy. There can be little doubt that Wishart was aware of Henry's designs upon the Cardinal, and that the tragedy in the Castle of St Andrews had been rehearsed long before. The ferocious jocularly of the Reformer over the mangled body—"these things we write merily"—is eminently characteristic, but does not impress us with any high sense either of his charity or his sagacity. For the murder was a political blunder as well as a political crime. Approved by a few stern and bitter fanatics, the death of Beaton scandalised the nation. Henry had devastated the Scottish Border; he had burnt the Scottish capital; now he had murdered the only Scottish statesman of European repute. The patriotic fire flamed up, and the people who had been on the verge of a spiritual revolt went back meekly to the Catholic fold. The Scots fighting at Pinkie reproached the English for having deserted the ancient faith. To be esteemed a heretic was thenceforth for many years nearly as disgraceful as to be esteemed an Englishman.

The reaction was in its nature temporary. The wave fell back, but the tide had not slackened. Nor might its further advance, beneficent or destructive, be arrested by any dike which panic-stricken orthodoxy could raise. The only

question that remained to be settled when Lethington, as a potential force, appeared on the field, involved merely the old struggle between the less and the more. Was it to be a moderate and constitutional reform, largely undertaken from within,—that is to say, by the Courts of the Church itself? or was it to be—Revolution? Knox elected to break with the past: he could not help himself, it may be; but the wisdom of his choice is still open to doubt. The Reformer in after years may sometimes have regretted that he turned a deaf ear to Hamilton's emphatic warning: "The Reformation in many things was not without reason, yet you will do well to provide yourselves with some new polity before you shake off the old. Our hill-men have a custom, when breaking a colt, to fasten two strong tethers to its head, one of which they keep fast till it is thoroughly made. The multitude, that beast with many heads, should just be so dealt with. Master Knox, I know, esteemeth me an enemy; but tell him from me he shall find it true that I speak."

The forces, direct and indirect, which shaped the Scottish Reformation, were very various. The "heresies of Martin Luther" were in the air. At certain seasons it is almost as difficult to escape the infection of heresy as it is difficult at others to escape the infection of fever. It

came from England with the fugitives who had fled from the cruelties of the Marian bishops; Scottish merchants and mariners trading with the Low Countries and the Rhine brought it back with their goods. The new generation, the rising men, the men of wit and spirit and learning, who could use their tongues and their pens with effect upon the people, were eager for change. The popular minstrelsy, sacred and profane, was on the side of the Reformers. The martyrs had borne their sufferings with meekness and patience; and heroic legends gathered round the scaffolds. The Scottish nobles, who had long regarded with a greedy eye the immense treasures of the Church, now knew that the English peers had been enriched from the hoards of the clergy. And the corruption of the monastic orders, the failure of discipline, the degradation of doctrine, had produced grave scandals which could no longer be tolerated by a society in which the moral sense was not dead.

The Protestant indictment of the Catholic Church in Scotland, however, has been far too sweeping.

No one certainly, except a bigot or a fanatic, will be disposed to undervalue the constancy of the Scottish martyrs at stake and scaffold. In the record of each execution there are pathetic little touches of humour and pathos which cling

indelibly to the memory ;— Wishart's simple words of leave-taking,—“for they would drink no more with him” ; the fortitude of the Perth journeymen, “every one comforting another, and assuring themselves to suppe together in the kingdom of heaven that night” ; Helen Stirk's farewell to the husband with whom she had earnestly desired to die,—“Therefore I will not bidde you good-night, for we sall suddanlie meet with joy in the kingdom of heaven” ; and her own death thereafter, in the pool hard by, when she had given the baby at her breast—“the sucking bairn”—to one of the bystanders. These had no fear of the dark road they were to travel,—“they constantly triumphed over Death and Sathan, even in the midst of the flaming fyre.” Nor is the human weakness of Ninian Kennedy, who “at first was faint, and gladly would have recanted,” less impressive or touching. Kennedy, like Cranmer, shrank from the fiery ordeal, yet in the hour of mortal agony was constant to what he held to be the truth. It may well be that the “faintness” of men like Cranmer and Kennedy is not less acceptable to Him who holds up “the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees,” than the confident and unfaltering witness of the strong man who goes to the stake with a song of thanksgiving on his lips, and a sense of triumph in his heart.

The nobility, the constancy, the heroism, of these simple people are beyond all praise; yet in fairness it must be remembered that the whole number of persons who suffered for heresy in Scotland was not large. The iniquitous industry of the Inquisition in the Netherlands is branded in black letters on the page of history. Men and women were strangled, beheaded, and burned alive in hundreds, because they had murmured against the rapacity of the priests, or could repeat a paraphrase by Clement Marot. It was estimated that before 1566 more than fifty thousand persons suspected of heresy had been put to death. Torture is not cumulative; the suffering of a thousand is not more intense than the suffering of one; and it may be argued that the culpability of the Inquisitor is not to be measured by the number of his victims. Apart from such abstruse paradoxes, however, it must be acknowledged that the religious persecution in Scotland was comparatively light. It cannot be said with any show of justice that the Scottish bishops were unmerciful. They did not love blood as Philip and Alva loved blood. It is clear, I think, that for many years the new opinions were unpopular, and that the ecclesiastical authorities had a free hand. "Then the people cried, 'Burne him ! burne him !'" I have no note of the exact numbers who suffered at Edin-

burgh and St Andrews; but I incline to believe that from first to last, during a period of twenty or thirty years, not more than twenty or thirty persons were put to death. The barbarous manner in which death was inflicted shocks our sensibilities; but at the time, and long afterwards, it was regarded in quite a different light. Heretics were burnt; so were witches; and I venture to say that, more than once after the Reformation, the old women who were burnt, during a single twelvemonth, because they rode on broomsticks to a midnight meeting with the devil, or turned themselves into cats and disturbed the neighbours by their caterwauling, outnumbered the heretics who were burnt during the whole period between 1538 and 1558 by "those bloody beasts," "those ravenous wolves," "those slaves of Satan," "those cruel tyrants and unmerciful hypocrites," — Cardinal David Beaton and Archbishop James Hamilton.¹ We

¹ Epithets culled from Knox and Calderwood I shall have occasion to speak of the trials for witchcraft later on; here I would only remark, that while there is sufficient evidence to show that the martyrs died well (though most of the lengthy "last speeches" are probably apocryphal), it is clear that the unfortunate creatures, who

were burnt and drowned as witches, bore themselves with equal (and really quite inexplicable) fortitude "Inexplicable," I say; for we must remember that, unlike the martyrs, they had no lofty conviction of duty, no fervour of faith, to support them; they were only the mean and vulgar victims of a popular delusion,

must remember, moreover, that the Catholic prelate had been taught to consider heresy a deadly crime, and that to burn the perishable body was to save the immortal soul. Estab-

and yet they died like heroes. The confessions they made while *under torture* (of Agnes Simpson, it is said, "they caused her to be conveyed into prison, there to receive such torture as hath been lately provided for witches in that country;" the obstinate warlock, Dr Fian, "so deeply had the devil entered into his heart," would not confess, although his nails had been "pulled off with a pair of pincers," and his legs had been "so crushed and beaten together that the blood and marrow spurted forth")—the confessions thus obtained were gruesomely grotesque. "At North Berwick Kirk the devil enjoined them all to a penance, which was that they should kiss his buttocks, in sign of duty to him, which, being put over the pulpit base, every one did as he had commanded them." "They took a cat and christened it, and the following night the said cat was conveyed into the midst of the sea by all these witches sailing in their riddles or cives" Isabel Grierson was burnt, and

her ashes scattered to the winds, for going to Adam Clark's house "in the likeness of his own cat"; Alice Nisbet suffered death for using the words "the bones to the fire and the soul to the devil," to take away the pains of labour, Agnes Finnie was worried at the stake, and then burnt to ashes, "for that falling a scolding with Bessie Currie about a bad sixpence, she threatened that she would gar the deil tak a bite of her." John Knox (although the Catholic satirists accused him of being a warlock himself, and thus securing the affection of Lord Ochiltree's daughter—"ane damosel of noble blood, and he ane auld decrepit creature of maist base degree of any that could be found in the country") had a keen nose for a witch. Lady Buccleuch, Lady Athol, Lady Huntly (and "her principal witch called Jonet") figure prominently in the narrative. The story of Alison Balfour has been vividly narrated by Mr Froude (*Short Studies*, i. 185). The last execution of a

lished institutions die hard; but it may be truly said that in no other organic revolution of so wide a sweep was the loss of life among the assailants so inconsiderable.

I have already referred to the part taken by approved writers, like Sir David Lindsay, in the work of the Reformation. But there was another class of writers, represented to us by the Wedderburns,¹ who rendered essential service. These men, who must have possessed no mean poetic faculty, took the popular songs and rhymes, many of which were lewd and obscene, and converted them into spirited hymns, in which the Lord was praised and the Pope denounced with equal energy and acerbity. The framers of the statute of 1551 complain that "printers constantly print buiks concerning the faith, ballads, songs, blasphemous rhymes, as well of kirkmen as temporals." These broadsheets were scattered over the land, and were

witch in Scotland took place at Dornoch in 1722,—an old woman, who, on being brought out for execution, the weather being severe, sat composedly warming herself by the fire prepared to consume her, while the other instruments of death were being got ready. — (C. Kirkpatrick Sharpe's History

of Witchcraft, p. 200.)

¹ James Wedderburn, the elder brother, who had a "good gift of poesie," escaped from the persecution, and died at Dieppe. It was his brother John who turned indecent "songs and rhymes" into godly hymns.—Calderwood, i. 143

immensely relished by a class to which more serious argument would probably have failed to appeal. The "Gude and Godly Ballates" are thus extremely interesting to those who are anxious to ascertain how the Reformation—the change of religious opinion among the masses—was brought about. They are what we would now call evangelical in their tone, and the music often recalls the rhythms and refrains of that negro minstrelsy which recent revivalism has appropriated. The language in which they are written is remarkably pure; I am not acquainted, indeed, with any better specimens of the idiomatic vigour and liquid sweetness of the Scots tongue at its best. A genuine vernacular melody pervades such lines as these:—

"O my deir heart, young Jesus sweet,
Prepare thy creddill in my spreit,
And I sall rock thee in my heart,
And never mair from thee depart,"—

or these (from the rendering of the 124th Psalm):—

"Like to ane bird tane in a net,
The whilk the fowler for her set,
Sa is our life weel win away "

They look forward with confidence to a triumphant issue,—“Be mirrie and glad, and be no more sad, The day of the Lord draws neir,”—

“Hay now the day dawns, The night is neere gone,”—and the note of victory is well sustained :—

“The net is broken in pieces smäll,
And we are savit fra their shame.
Our hope was ay and ever sall
Be in the Lord, and in his name,
The whilk hes creat hevin so hie,
And made the eird so marvellouslie,
And all the ferlies of the same ”

The burden of the hymns, as was natural, is the superiority of the worship of our Lord to the worship of saint or Virgin,—“For ye were all at God’s horn; This babe to you that now is born, Sall make you saif and for you die, And you restore to liberty;”—“He tholit pains, Of hunger, cauld, and miserie, And we gat life when he did die.” The adaptation of the popular airs sometimes produces a rather grotesque effect, as in the lines with the refrain, “Who is at my window? who? who? Goe from my window; goe, goe;” or in those into which the “Huntsman’s Chorus” is introduced :—

“With hunts up, with hunts up,
It is now perfite day;
Jesus our King is gane in hunting,
Who likes to speed they may.
The hunter is Christ that hunts in haist,
The hunds are Peter and Paul;
The Paip is the fox, Rome is the rox
That rubbis us on the gall ”

Vigorously idiomatic as these verses are, those on the monks, friars, and nuns, which begin :—

“Of Scotland well the friers of Faill
The limmery lang hes lastit,
The monks of Melrose made gude kaill
On Friday when they fastit,”—

are even more telling. The rapacity of the pardoners who gave “remission of sins in auld sheep’s skins,” and of the friars who made fortunes out of the pains of purgatory,—“the reik sa wonder dear they salde, For money, gold, and landes,” and out of worthless masses for the dead, “Requiem æternam fast they patter, Before the deid with holy water,” leads up to the conclusion of the whole matter,—“The Paip, that pagan full of pride, He hes us blinded lang.”

I have said that the charges against the Catholic clergy have been somewhat highly coloured by Protestant apologists. But when every reasonable allowance is made, it must be admitted that the state of the Church invited attack. The best men were aware that reform was inevitable; and, in point of fact, the repair of the ecclesiastical edifice had been undertaken when the storm burst. The scandals connected with concubinage, the traffic in indulgences, non-residence, pluralities, and the action of the Consistorial Courts, had attracted the attention

of the Convention which met at Edinburgh in 1549, and appropriate remedies were being devised. Whether these would have proved effectual cannot now be known. The Church, if not dead, was moribund; and it may be that more trenchant treatment was needed than the orthodox surgery would have sanctioned.

Where there is smoke there is fire; and a long period of ease and prosperity had undoubtedly demoralised the clergy. Their wealth, their numbers, their indolence, their sensuality, their rapacity, their childish ignorance and vanity, furnished abundant material for the popular moralist and the popular satirist. The people had lost faith in them; they had lost faith in themselves. The energies of a vast organisation were paralysed by indecision and indifference as much as by incapacity. The life had been eaten out of its service; there was no reality in its creed. The prayers were learned by rote; the sermons were mechanical and perfunctory. The fiery zeal of the Reformers gave force to their denunciations and a rude eloquence to their appeals; and the common people, deserting the splendid shrines which the piety of their ancestors had raised, flocked to listen to teachers who were in deadly earnest. The spells which had been potent had lost their force. The "curse" pronounced by the priest had once been tremen-

dously effective; but it had been vulgarised by mean and mercenary use; and now when the Vicar rose on Sunday and cried, "One hath tint a spurtell; there is a flail stolen beyond the barn; the good-wife on the other side of the gate hath lost a horn-spoon; God's curse and mine I give to them that knoweth of this gear, and restores it not!"—the people laughed in his face. The denunciations of the Church, like so much else, had become a farce, which provoked open ridicule. Even the rustic gossip, drinking his "Sunday's penny" at the ale-house door, would jest with the passing friar upon the prudent economy of his investment. "Will they not give us a letter of cursing for a plack, to last for a whole year, to curse all that looks over our dike? *That* keepeth our corn better than the sleeping boy, who will have three shillings in fee, a sark, and a pair of shoon in the year." The exactions of the Church, however, especially in the Consistorial Courts, ultimately became oppressive, and excited the keenest resentment. The experience of the litigants before these ecclesiastical tribunals supplied not a few shafts for Lindsay's quiver. Many of them no doubt had found with the unlucky "Pauper" in 'The Three Estates,' that while the expenses of process were ruinous, no redress was to be had,—
"Bot I gat never my gude gray meir again."

According to a manuscript in the Advocates' Library, there were at the time of the Reformation about four thousand six hundred men and women in Scotland charged with ecclesiastical duties. Of these, thirteen were bishops, sixty priors and abbots, five hundred parsons, two thousand vicars, eleven hundred monks, friars, and nuns. This was a tremendous drain upon the productive power of the country; but the property which had been diverted from secular uses to the support of the priesthood was, proportionately, even greater. The resources of the Church were immense: it has been estimated (though the estimate is probably much exaggerated) that the clergy drew in one form or other one half of the annual income of the land. "Halfe the riches on the molde is seasit in their handes." The possession of such enormous wealth was of course attended with danger, as well as fertile of abuse. In the first place, it led to what was in effect the secularisation of the temporalities—the great prizes—of the Church: they became a provision for needy courtiers and royal bastards. The Archbishop of St Andrews, who fell at Flodden, was the natural son of James III.; and long before the Reformation, the revenues of the great abbeys and priories were held *in commendam* by laymen whose services to the State could not be

otherwise rewarded. In the next place, it excited the cupidity of the needy nobles. Arran was not credited by his contemporaries with keen political discernment; but when he told Sadler that so many great men in the kingdom were Papists, that "unless the sin of covetousness brought them to it," he saw no chance of reformation, he proved himself a true prophet; he hit the nail on the head. The Reformed preachers did their part fairly well; but if the title of the aristocracy to the patrimony of the Church of Rome had not been identified with Protestantism, it is probable that the Church of Knox would have been short-lived. It was of the English nobles that Hallam remarked in a rare epigram, "According to the general laws of human nature, they gave a readier reception to truths which made their estates more secure"; but the irony would have been even more incisive if it had been applied to the "gaunt and hungry nobles of Scotland."

Although the Church had become a dead weight upon the productive industry of the nation, the burden might have been borne without serious complaint if the clergy could have retained the respect of the influential laity. I do not attach much importance, as I have said, to the grosser charges in the indictment against the Church. Knox's legends of monastic gallan-

tries are like the stories of Boccaccio. "Mr Norman Galloway was brunt," Pitscottie says, "because he married ane wife; but if he had had ane thousand whoors, he had never been quarrelled." "They think na shame," one of the moralists in 'The Three Estates' observes, "to have ane, huir, and some hes three." There is no reason to doubt that celibacy led to concubinage; but the connection, in the case of the secular clergy at least, was not regarded, by the opinion of the time, as immoral: it was a domestic and permanent arrangement, and only in a technical sense (as wanting the formal sanction of the Church) differed from marriage. When we hear of the proclamation in open Parliament of clerical irregularities in high places, we are apt to impute the disclosure to a cynical disregard of public opinion and public decency, —the truth being that, until the very eve of the Reformation, concubinage did not in any appreciable measure offend the conscience of the community.

To maintain, however, that concubinage was not demoralising, is to shut our eyes to the plainest facts. A certain looseness and laxity of moral fibre was unquestionably the result of an equivocal connection; and it was at least indirectly responsible for the sloth, ignorance, and spiritual apathy which had come to characterise the cleri-

cal caste. Lindsay's satire is most trenchant when it is directed against the indolence of the priesthood. "Sleuthful idleness" is an injury to the Commonwealth. "Qua laboures nocht he sall not eat," is the salutary moral which he is constantly enforcing. Nor was the ignorance of the clerical teacher less open to observation. "The ignorance of the times was so great, that even the priests did think the New Testament to have been composed by Martin Luther." Nor was this ignorance any bar to preferment. George Crichton, Bishop of Dunkeld, "a man nobly disposed and a great housekeeper," is reported to have thanked God that he knew neither the Old Testament nor the New, and "yet had prospered well enough in his day." The frivolous subtleties which engaged the attention of the learned were perhaps even more symptomatic of the state of mental torpor into which the Church had fallen. The great Paternoster controversy was, we learn, the occasion of fierce and prolonged debate. Should the Paternoster be addressed to the saints, or to God only? That was the question. "In the University the contention ceased not; whereupon the doctors did assemble to dispute and decide the question. In that meeting some held that the Paternoster was said to God *formaliter*, and to saints *materialiter*; others, not liking

this distinction, said that the Paternoster ought to be said to God *principaliter*, and to saints *minus principaliter*; others would have it *ultimate et non ultimate*; others *primario et secundario*; and some (wherewith the most voices went) that it should be said to God *capiendo stricte*, and to saints *capiendo large*." As the doctors differed, the question was referred to the Synod, where it was diplomatically determined, after long debate, that the Paternoster ought to be said to God, "yet so that the saints ought also to be invoked."

To this the doctors had come. The people sat in darkness, while spiritual and intellectual stupor settled, like densest fog, upon the Church. The monasteries, as nurseries of learning and of the arts, of statesmen and jurists, of poets and historians, had accomplished the object for which they were instituted. The end had come. The old order passed away. Fresh activities were being called into action; new weapons were being forged. The monotonous lesson which universal experience enforces was repeating itself once again. System after system has its day; institution succeeds institution;—

"And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world"

CHAPTER FIVE.

THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION.

DURING the year 1559 the figure of the young Laird of Lethington becomes brilliantly distinct; a flood of light is poured upon him; we have thenceforth week by week, sometimes day by day, the letters written by himself, as well as constant allusions to him in the letters of his contemporaries. Previous to 1559 the notices, on the contrary, are singularly bald and curt; and we seek in vain for any adequate explanation of the amazing influence which we find him wielding when he suddenly emerges from almost total obscurity. We are still, therefore (except for a few salient facts), in the region of conjecture, and must piece together the scanty material at our disposal as best we can.

We have seen that Sir Richard was not an ardent Reformer, and his attitude to the controversies of the time is not unskillfully defined by Knox. Wishart, attended by Knox (carrying

his uncomfortable two-handed sword, we may presume), had been a guest at Lethington the night before his apprehension. "The second nicht he lay in Lethingtoun, the Laird whereof was ever civil, albeit not persuaded in religion." *Ever civil, albeit not persuaded in religion.* That was in 1546, when the younger Lethington was still a lad. It is probable, indeed, that he was absent from home at the time,—at St Andrews or elsewhere. The Reformer does not allude to him, as he probably would have done had he then made the acquaintance of one who was afterwards so famous, and so closely associated with the new order of things. In 1553 Maitland was married to Janet, the daughter of Menteith of Kerse; and during the next year at latest he must have entered the public service,—the first payment of a pension of one hundred and fifty pounds being then entered in the Treasurer's accounts. It is not until 1555, however, that he is introduced into Knox's narrative; and the earliest allusion is very significant. Knox returned from Geneva sometime during the autumn of that year—"in the end of the harvest"—to find that, in the capital at least, there were many secret "professors" of the Reformed doctrines, who did not scruple to join in the worship, and to partake of the sacraments, of the Catholic Church. To bow in the house of Rimmon was

an offence which the intrepid Reformer could not stomach, and against which he vehemently protested. The mass was idolatry, and it was a deadly sin to hold any truce with the idolater. "Wherewith the conscience of some being effrayed, the matter began to be agitat fra man to man, and so was the said John called to supper by the Laird of Dun, for that same purpose, whare was convened David Forress, Maister Robert Lockhart, John Willock, and William Maitland of Lethingtoun, younger, a man of good learning and of sharp wit and reasoning. The question was proposed, and it was answered by the said John, 'That it was nowise lawful to present himself to that idol.' Nothing was omitted that might mak for the temperisar, and yet was every head so fully answered, and especially ane whairunto they thocht their great defence stood (to wit, that Paul, at the commandment of James, and of the elders of Jerusalem, passed to the Temple and feigned himself to pay his vows with the others). This, we say, and others, were so fully answered, that William Maitland concluded, saying, 'I see perfectly that our shifts will serve nothing before God, seeing that they stand us in so small stead before man.' The answer of John Knox to the fact of Paul, and to the commandment of James, was, that Paul's fact had nothing to do with

their going to Mass ; for to pay vows was sometimes God's commandment, and was never idolatry ; but their Mass from the beginning was and remained odious idolatry ; therefore the facts were most unlike. Secondly (said he), I greatly doubt whether either James's commandment or Paul's obedience proceeded from the Holy Ghost." The passage is extremely characteristic, and, in so far as it represents the original conflict of opinion (afterwards to become more pronounced) between the moderate and radical parties in the infant Church, extremely instructive. This was the first controversy between Knox and Maitland of which any record has been preserved ; it was the first of many in which (according to Knox) " the said John " was uniformly successful. One would have liked to hear, on this as on other occasions, what Lethington for his part had to say ;—whether he acknowledged, or whether he denied, that he had been driven from the field, and that the preacher was more than a match for the politician. These academical controversies will be fully described and discussed in a future chapter ; meantime it is enough to point out that the passage I have quoted admirably illustrates one of the Reformer's most characteristic traits,—his profound confidence in his own infallibility. Victory remained with him ; but it was

a victory not over Lethington only, but over Lethington with James and Paul at his back. "I greatly doubt whether either James's commandment or Paul's obedience proceeded from the Holy Ghost."

Knox was now fifty years old, and the great work of his life still lay in the future. From the park of Lethington one looks down upon the hamlet where he was born—the suburb of Haddington, on the further bank of the Tyne. It seems to me, I confess, a most strange coincidence that the two most remarkable men—the two most notable figures—of the age in Scotland, should have had, as we may say, a common birthplace,—should have sprung, so to speak, from the same soil; for the Castle of Lethington is barely a mile from the "Gifford Gait." More than twenty years had passed since Knox had received from a Black Friar—that Black Friar against whom the Grey Friars "rouped as they had been ravens, yea, rather, they yelled and roared as devils in hell"—his first "taste of the truth." Since then his adventures had rivalled the apostle's,—“In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often,

in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." He had gone to St Andrews after the Cardinal's slaughter—an act which, like the murder of Rizzio,¹ he cordially approved; he had been ordained to the ministry in the Abbey Church, not by the hands of the bishop, but by the call of the brethren; he had been in the Castle during the siege; he had been made prisoner by the French; he had been a galley-slave for many months, and had seen—far off at sea—from the bench to which he was chained, the burnished copper of the cathedral roof reflect the morning sun. Then he was released; but the clouds had closed over Scotland, and he did not venture to return. So he had remained abroad—mainly with Calvin at Geneva—until landing at Leith, in the September of 1555, he began to exhort secretly in the house where he lodged,—the house of James Syme, "that notable man of God." It was there and then that he met Eliza-

¹ This has been denied; but the evidence is conclusive. Thus, when speaking of the old Lord Ruthven, he adds, "Father to him that prudently gave counsel to tack just punishment upon that knave Davie"; and again, "That great abuser of this commonwealth,

that pultron and vile knave Davie, was justlie punished by —, who, all for their just act, and most worthy of all praise, are now unworthily left of their brethren, and suffer the bitterness of banishment and exile." —History of the Reformation, 1. 99, 235.

beth Adamson, of whose death he has left so impressive a narrative. "And she shortly thereafter slept in the Lord Jesus, to the no small comfort of those who saw her blessed departing. This we could not omit of this worthy woman, who gave sa notable a confession, before that the great licht of God's word did universallie shine throughout this realm."

It is obvious, from Knox's narrative, that as early as 1555, Maitland occupied a recognised and assured position. On that occasion he appears to have been the spokesman of the party which was inclined to "temporise." That party had not resolved definitely to break with the Catholic Church, or to embark in a religious war of which the issue could not be foreseen, but which was certain, whenever fanatical passion was roused, to be carried to the last extremity. It was the party of the Renaissance rather than of the Reformation,—of the new learning rather than of the New Light. It was the party to which the younger men mainly belonged,—the men of wider culture and a more liberal creed. Of these moderate men, who in one sense, however, most truly represented the distinctive principles of the Revolution, Lethington was the leader. To him, more impressively than to the others, the dying appeal of Wedderburn might have been addressed,—“We have been acting

our part in the theater ; you are to succeed ; see that you act your part faithfullie ! ”

The scene to which I have just alluded must be kept in mind if we desire to understand Lethington's attitude during the next four years. He was now in the service of Marie of Lorraine ; three years later, on the death of Bishop Panter of Ross, he became her Secretary of State. He was at first probably employed chiefly in diplomatic correspondence ; but he was sent as an envoy to London in February 1558, and again to Paris, in a similar capacity, in March 1559. It is probably to the latter mission that Buchanan refers in the 'Chameleon,' when he asserts that Maitland actually outwitted the Cardinal of Lorraine, who was then esteemed the first diplomatist in Europe. But during all these years he seems to have taken little, if any, part in the domestic controversies of the time. Some of the polemical papers issued by the Government were probably drawn by him ; but his name does not appear. His relations with the Regent must have been very confidential : there is a curious entry in the Treasurer's accounts which points to close social intimacy—"To the Regent £10, to play at the carts with the Earl of Huntley and young Lethingtoun ;" and Lord Wharton, writing to London in November 1557, expressly mentions that Maitland was then "great with the Dowager."

Knox was very wroth when the Queen was appointed Regent. She was a Catholic; she was a female; and the author of 'The Monstrous Regiment of Women' was naturally indignant. "She was made Regent in the year of God 1554, and a crown put upon her head, as seemly a sight (if men had eyes) as to put a saddle upon the back of an unruly cow." For Lethington, however, the large and magnanimous nature of Marie of Lorraine must have had a powerful attraction; and the political opinions which she held were in harmony with his own.¹ She appears to have been sincerely anxious to promote a moderate policy, to conciliate public opinion, to reconcile the contending factions, to bring about an accord. She failed—as she was bound to fail. Between the obstinate conservatism of the Bishop of Moray, who would not put

¹ Her love of justice was proverbial. "Do justice," she wrote to the judges, "to this poor woman, for they have done her great wrong, the small flies are taken in the spider's web, and the large ones pass through."—National MSS. of Scotland, vol. iii., No. 28. "In her court," says Spottiswoode, "she kept a wonderful gravity, tolerating no licentiousness; her maids were always busied in some virtuous exercise, and to

them she was an ensample every way of modesty, chastity, and the best virtues."—Spottiswoode, i. 320. This is the woman against whom Knox, inflated with spiritual pride, denounced the judgment of God. "Within few days after, yea, some say that very day, began her belly and loathsome legs to swell, and so continued till that God did execute His judgment upon her."

away his concubine "mair nor the Bishop of St Andrews," on the one hand, and the arid but passionate dogmatism of Knox and Glencairn on the other, it was hopeless to look for compromise. War was inevitable. The charges of bad faith that the preachers directed against the Regent are now discredited. The pledges of princes, she is reported to have said, were not to be too strictly construed. "It became not subjects to burden their princes with promises, further than it pleaseth them to keep the same." Such speeches rest on Knox's unsupported testimony. The Reformer, we have seen, was easily gulled; he implicitly accepted every piece of idle gossip that told against the enemies of the truth; his wonderfully animated and realistic narrative is the *chronique scandaleuse* of the Reformation. The Regent did not mean to deceive; it was the position that was equivocal. She was carried in different directions by contending currents, whose violence she could not control. She did her best, I believe. She was anxious that the ecclesiastical estate should be purified—so far she went with the Reformers; but at the same time she was zealous for the ancient faith. Had Lethington (or such as Lethington) been able to retain command of the reforming forces, an "accord" might have been arrived at. But they escaped from his control. Knox's coarser and

more imperative personality stamped itself indelibly upon the infant Church. The movement gained momentum as it proceeded. The flood increased in destructiveness as it descended. It ceased to be Reform; it grew to be Revolution. On the one side, there was the congregation of Jesus Christ; on the other, the synagogue of Satan. The ancient temples of the faith were "monuments of idolatry;" the priests who ministered at their altars, "Baal's shaven sort," who "bare the beast's mark." The framers of the famous address—"To the Generation of Antichrist, the Pestilent Prelates and their Shavelings within Scotland"—gave characteristic utterance to the feeling which was growing rapidly more intense: "Yea, we shall begin that same war which God commanded Israel to execute against the Canaanites; that is, contract of peace shall never be made till ye desist from your open idolatry and cruel persecution of God's children. And this we signify unto you in the name of the eternal God, and of His Son Jesus Christ, whose verity we profess, and Evangel we will have preached, and holy sacraments rightly ministrat, so long as God will assist us to gainstand your idolatry."

Nor was this all. The Congregation gradually became the focus of political disaffection as well as of religious animosity. They produced autho-

rities from Holy Writ for sedition and rebellion as well as for murder. Crude democratic theories were in vogue. A theocracy saturated with socialism was the form of government which the leaders of the movement openly approved. The Romish priests had appropriated the patrimony of the people; and the singular certification of the beggars—"The Blynd, Cruked, Bedrelles, Wedowis, Orphelingis, and all uther Pure, sa viseit be the hand of God, as may not worke"—might have been penned by Mirabeau or St Just. "We have thought good therefore, or we enter with you in conflict, to warn you in the name of the great God, by this public writing, affixed on the gates where ye now dwell, that ye remove furth of our said Hospitals, betwixt this and the feast of Whitsunday next, so that we, the only lawful proprietors thereof, may enter thereto, and afterward enjoy thai commodities of the Kirk, quhilk ye have hereunto wrongouslie halden fra us." The letters that the Congregation addressed to the Regent were arrogant and masterful,—letters that might rather, as she said, "have come from a prince to his subjects than from subjects to them that bare authority." It was at this time that the modern theory that the governor is the servant of the governed, and therefore liable to be censured at their pleasure, first took shape. Knox, indeed, accepted the

doctrine of popular rights and civil licence with a characteristic reservation,—the anathema against the unpopular ruler was to be pronounced by a prophet of the Lord. “We cannot forbid our preachers to reprehend that which the Spirit of God, speaking in the prophets and apostles, have reprehended before them. Eliah did personally reprove Achab and Jesabel of idolatry, of avarice, murder, and such-like. Isaias called the magistrates of Jerusalem, in his time, companions of thieves, princes of Sodom, bribe-takers, and murderers. Jeremie said, the bones of King Jehoiakim should wither with the sun. Christ called Herod a fox. Paul called the High Priest a painted wall, and prayed to God that he would strike him, because, against justice, he commanded him to be smitten.”¹ It may be added that, among the Reformers, even before Elizabeth succeeded to the English throne, the old enmity to England was dead or dying. Certain tragic accidents connected with Mary’s mar-

¹ Knox resented the imputation of sedition, but on very slender grounds, and the Queen gave expression to the general feeling when she wrote that “it is not the advancement of the Word and religion which is sought at this time, but rather a pretence to overthrow or alter” the existing Government.

Knox admits that the charge was generally believed. “For many (and our brethren of Lothian especially) began to murmur that we sought another thing than religion, and so ceased to assist us certain days after that we were come to Edinburgh.”—Knox, i. 419, 437.

riage had changed the current of the national feeling; and the soldiers and statesmen of France unexpectedly found themselves regarded with the jealous aversion and alarm which the Scots had hitherto reserved for their nearest neighbours. What between political discontent, and the bitterness of religious discord, conciliation became thenceforth a hopeless enterprise. The Queen was compelled, by the imperious instinct of self-preservation, to sanction a policy of repression,—a policy for which she had naturally no taste, and to which she was driven against her better judgment.

The mine had been carefully laid when, in the spring of 1559, Knox again returned to Scotland. To most eyes the future was dim and clouded; but one man at least knew what he wanted. Knox had been bred in a school of exact logic, and he had formulated the articles of his revolutionary code with the scientific precision of his master. Think of him what we may, the essential greatness of the great Reformer cannot be disputed. The simple elemental forces of nature sometimes unveil themselves to our eyes, and the Scottish iconoclast was one of these forces. But Knox's intellect was constructive as well as destructive. He had no reverence, and he had no diffidence. He was willing to make a *tabula rasa* of the past; but then,

on the other hand, a quite original theory of the universe—a brand new scheme of doctrine and discipline—was ready, on a day's notice, to take its place. The First Confession of Faith, in which the whole plan of the Divine government from the remotest eternity is explained with transparent lucidity, was prepared in less than a week. The facility with which he constructed a speculative proposition has never been excelled; no timid respect for antiquity, for long experience or inveterate custom, weakened the invention of this audacious artist. One may say, almost without exaggeration, that John Knox *was* the Reformation. It is extremely doubtful whether, at any time during his life, the majority of the Scottish nation was Protestant in more than name. But the Reformers were a compact and resolute minority, led by a man who never doubted that he held a Divine commission; whereas the mass of the people were indifferent and inert. No one cared, apparently, to offer a strenuous resistance to revolution. The priests had lost heart as they had lost faith. "The great men gaped after the Church estates, and the commoners were fleshed with the spoils of abbeys and religious houses."¹

"John Knox was the Reformation,"—a fact

¹ Lord Herries's Memoirs, p. 55.

which, as we shall find, meant much. It meant that the moderate reformers in either Church had been swept aside. It meant that the "monuments of idolatry" had been violently cast down. It meant that the Catholic tradition had been contemptuously discarded. It meant, in short, that there had been a convulsion of nature,—the hurricane and the earthquake, not the silent renovation and gentle processes of the spring.

The growing exasperation of the contending factions increased the difficulties of Maitland's position. The Regent, who had been forced, much against her inclination, to become a partisan, was now surrounded by French soldiers and Romish priests. A Protestant Secretary of State in such society was an anomaly, if not a scandal. Maitland was sincerely attached to the Queen, and he was naturally unwilling to quit her service. She was ill and in peril; shut up within the walls of Leith, and exposed to all the miseries of a siege. We do not know much of the circumstances which at last forced him to withdraw. Knox says that he came over to the Lords a few days before All Hallow evin; and sometime in September he had intimated to Sir James Croft that his departure was imminent. He had probably waited on in the hope that some reasonable terms of accord might be

devised; and it was only when the annoyances to which he was exposed became intolerable, that he left. Modern historians have been rather inclined to suggest that he deserted and betrayed the Queen. It was not in this light, however, that his conduct was regarded by earlier writers who were better acquainted with the circumstances than we can be. Both Knox and Calderwood agree that Maitland was not only "suspected" as one that favoured the Congregation, but was actually in danger of his life. He had "spared not to speak his conscience," "to utter his mind in controversies of religion," when the doctors of the Sorbonne, who had been brought across from Paris to make an end of heresy (a company or two of soldiers, as matters then stood, would have proved a stronger argument), failed to convince him. Maitland, as we know, had a sharp tongue and a ready wit; and the Sorbonne doctors were so annoyed, that, in concert with the Bishop of Amiens, they took what they probably regarded as more effectual means to effect his conversion. "The Bishop it was," according to Calderwood,¹ "that stirred up the French soldiers to kill William Matlane of Lethington, because his

¹ And also according to Buchanan, from whose History (chap. xvi.) Calderwood's account is obviously derived.

Sorbonne doctors could not refute him with sufficient reasons in the conference with them." "Which, perceived by the Secretary," Knox adds, "he convoyed himself away in a morning and rendered himself to Maister Kirkaldie, Lard of Grange," who had already joined the Congregation.

Apart, however, from the irksomeness of life in a beleaguered city, among unfriendly and hostile critics, it is easy to understand why Maitland, as a moderate Reformer, should have been anxious to regain his liberty of action. The fanatical spirit which had taken possession of the Congregation made him uneasy. The leaders were losing control of their followers. Anarchical forces, which threatened the very foundations of society, had been recklessly liberated. The religious saturnalia which followed was alienating the prudent and frightening the timid. Maitland had by this time perceived, with his intuitive and unfailing sagacity, that the enterprise of the Reformers could not be successfully prosecuted without the help of Elizabeth; and the help of Elizabeth was not to be had on such terms. The destructive forces, if left to themselves, would leave only a blackened ruin behind; it was essential, if any real advance was to be made—if any true progress was to be secured—that they

should be directed and controlled by some one who could enlist on behalf of social order and a religious peace the temperate wisdom of either nation.

Lethington was eagerly welcomed by the Lords of the Congregation, of whom the Prior of St Andrews, the Earls of Glencairn and Argyll, and Kirkaldy of Grange, had been for some months the actual, if not the nominal, leaders. John Knox of course was with them; and his sheer force of character and impressive power of appeal had been of the utmost service in keeping them together. But there was no one among them with a trained capacity for the conduct of public affairs, and with the organising faculty which is needed to give political coherence to the irregular impulses of popular enthusiasm. Maitland was the one man in Scotland at the moment who could fill the place; and the adhesion of a young and daring, but astute and far-seeing diplomatist—one who had already, moreover, been brought into close official relations with the English Government—was an enormous advantage. The personal fascination which Maitland exercised over the English Queen was now successfully exerted. Elizabeth's scruples were overcome, and Lord Grey, with eight or ten thousand men-at-arms, was sent across the Border.

One of the earlier and nobler actors here passes from our story. Marie of Lorraine (she was Marie of Lorraine by birth, Marie of Longueville by marriage) had been for some time in broken health; the spirit was still high and indomitable, but the flesh was weak; and early in 1560 it became generally known that the Queen was dying. She lingered on for several months,—an occasional gleam of success lighting up the gloom that yet gathered steadily round her deathbed. While the French soldiers, protected by nothing stronger than a “sand wall,” as Norfolk contemptuously termed it (“it is shame to lie so long at a sand wall”¹), still held the English army at bay, the Regent had bidden farewell to friend and foe. She died in the Castle of Edinburgh—the victim of a slow and wasting malady—far from her own people, far from her native France—a lonely and defeated woman. She suffered for the sins of others, who left her in a distant land to bear the heat and burden of the day alone. But to the end her great qualities asserted themselves,—her sweet, generous, and forgiving temper, her magnanimity and breadth of view, her silent and patient heroism. The end, long looked for, came at last,—somewhat suddenly. It was a painful and pathetic scene,

¹ Norfolk, 27th April 1560.

which stirred the hearts of stern and ruthless nobles, but of which Knox writes in his "merriest" vein. She had called one of his long-winded denunciations a "pasquil," and he had never forgotten the offence. The tortuous intrigues and politic duplicities of the Minister of Righteousness may be forgiven by those who hold that the end justifies the means; but the sheer inhumanity which Knox occasionally manifested hardly, from any point of view, admits of palliation. The times were rough: it was a wild society; yet among all its records of violence and crime, no page is more revolting to the modern student of morals than that on which the Historian of the Reformation—deliberately, in cold blood, long after the event—registers his indecent triumph.

But I anticipate. Some of the incidents of the eventful year when, in Pitscottie's phrase, "began the uproar of religion," must be more particularly noticed.

CHAPTER SIX.

THE REVOLUTION.

“THE greatest glory of a building is not in its stones nor in its gold. Its glory is in its Age, and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay, even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity. It is in their lasting witness against men, in their quiet contrast with the transitional character of all things, in the strength which, through the lapse of seasons and times, and the decline and birth of dynasties, and the changing of the face of the earth, and of the limits of the sea, maintains its sculptured shapeliness for a time insuperable, connects forgotten and following ages with each other, and half constitutes the identity, as it concentrates the sympathy, of nations; it is in that golden stain of time that we are to look for the real light, and colour, and preciousness of

architecture ; and it is not until a building has assumed this character, till it has been intrusted with the fame and hallowed by the deeds of men, till its walls have been witnesses of suffering and its pillars rise out of the shadows of death, that its existence, more lasting as it is than that of the natural objects of the world around it, can be gifted with even so much as these possess of language and of life."

So far Mr Ruskin.

Scotland was singularly rich in early masterpieces of Christian art. Thirteen cathedrals, as well as a vast number of churches attached to the monastic establishments, had been erected between Kirkwall and Whithorn, between Iona and St Andrews. Scotland might be the poorest and rudest country in Europe, but its churches were as spacious, as massive, as splendidly decorated, as the temples of Italy or France ; and the nation was justly proud of these noble buildings. The mediæval minster was not built in a day ; the solid walls had been slowly raised while generation after generation of pious worshippers passed away like the leaves ; architect had succeeded architect—each impressing his own personality, the genuine artistic feeling of his own time, upon tower and column, upon arch and buttress. The variety, the intricacy, the subtle contrasts of the majestic pile, upon which, after

so many years, the last carven stone had been laid, could not but stir such feelings as are experienced in the presence of great natural marvels; for here too the hand of man had ceased to be felt. The Cathedral of Elgin was "noble and beautiful, the mirror of the land and the fair glory of the realm"; but the cathedrals of St Andrews and Aberdeen, of Glasgow and Dunblane, were just as famous. In the Abbey of Dunfermline "three sovereign princes with all their retinue" could be lodged; yet Melrose, Paisley, and Aberbrothick were, we are told, second to none. The sound of the great bells of Kirkwall could be heard across the stormy firth by the dwellers on the mainland; Chanonry was the northern Wells,—an architectural gem of extraordinary purity and finish. Nor was their impressive beauty of design and execution their only title to regard. In a rude age, the sanctity which attached to the monastic buildings served in a measure to protect them from violence; and they had become in course of time the public museums and the public libraries, where the most venerable relics—the historical records and title-deeds of the nation—had been deposited. Many of them, besides, had been intimately associated with the most memorable events in the national history. The Scottish kings had been crowned at Scone; they had

been buried at Melrose and Iona. Before the high altar of Cambuskenneth the Scottish nobles had sworn fealty to Bruce. There, too, the first Scottish Parliament had been held. The Charterhouse of Perth had been founded by the accomplished author of 'The King's Quair;' Dunfermline was the shrine of the sainted Margaret. On their internal decoration, moreover, the wealth of priest and noble had been freely spent. The sacramental vestments were marvels of rich embroidery; the most delicate art of the workers in silver and gold had been lavished upon the sacred vessels. Articles of priceless value—reliquaries, albs, chasubles, copes, cibories, crosses, chandeliers, lamps, censers, organs, pictures, statues—had been ungrudgingly devoted to the service of God. With much that was meretricious and much that was puerile, it might yet be said with confidence that in these august sanctuaries of the medieval Catholicism, the deepest and most imaginative expression of the national life was to be found.

Knox landed at Leith on the second of May 1559; and within a month of his coming, many of the noblest churches in Scotland had been utterly wrecked. His progress was marked by ruin and devastation; it was like the track of an avenging angel. The zigzag of the lightning is not more destructive. From Perth to

Cupar; from Cupar to Crail, St Andrews, and Lindores; then by Scone, Stirling, and Linlithgow to Edinburgh,—the “fiery besom” which had been seen in the sky, and which had presaged ruin and disaster, swept across the land. The slighter and more delicate fabrics were cast down; when the time-stained, weather-beaten mass of lichened stone—rising like a natural rock above the surrounding hovels—successfully defied pick and axe, crowbar and hammer, the windows were smashed, the statues defaced, the interior gutted. It cannot be said, perhaps, that much was taken away,—vandalism rejoices rather in havoc than in spoil; and on the fires which they kindled with the precious wood whereon the pains of hell and the glories of paradise had been carved with untiring devotion and illimitable industry, manuscripts of unknown antiquity, missals illuminated by Flemish and German artists, the registers of the church, the records of the State, the sacred vestments, the holy vessels, were indiscriminately heaped. A blind rage and fury had taken possession of the destroying army; and a handful of fanatics—on the march from Perth to Edinburgh, Spottiswoode says, “they passed not three hundred men in all”—destroyed in a month the most precious heirlooms of a people. Among the churches that were wrecked or defaced while the

iconoclastic fever lasted were those of St Andrews, Edinburgh, Dunblane, Dunkeld, Dunfermline, Aberbrothick, Kelso, Kilwinning, Lesmahagow, Lindores, Perth, Balmerino, Cupar, Crossraguel, Paisley, Stirling, Cambuskenneth, St Ninians, and Scone. It was pitiful wastefulness,—hardly to be justified by the plea that it was only a reprisal, or by that other plea urged by the reformers,—“We, perceiving how Satan in his members, the antichrist of our time, cruelly doth rage,” and resolute that no deceitful truce be patched up with “dumb dogges and horned bishops,” here—once and for all—make any terms of accord, which “politic heads” might devise, now and in all time coming, impossible.

Knox arrived at Perth on the 10th of May, and on the 11th the devastation began. After a sermon by the Reformer in St John’s Church—“that thundering sermon against idolatry”—a priest, “to declare his malapert presumption,” opened up a glorious tabernacle that stood upon the high altar. Such a proceeding was, of course, intolerable, and certain godly men who had remained behind—the rest had gone to dinner—having first stoned the priests, proceeded “to put hands to the said tabernacle, and to all other monuments of idolatry.” This they did with such despatch that before the “rascal multitude” had dined, the business was finished.

The rascal multitude finding themselves anticipated at St John's, proceeded "without deliberation" to the Black and Grey Friars, and then to the Charterhouse,—a building of "a wondrous cost and greatness." Thereafter "the common people began to seek some spoil" (which they found in abundance—such scandalous puncheons of salt beef!—such sheets, blankets, and beds as no Earl in Scotland had better!); but the earnest professors sought only to abolish the places and monuments of idolatry, in which they were so busy and laborious that, within two days, only the bare walls of these great religious foundations remained.

At Crail, at Anstruther, and at St Andrews, the Reformation repeated itself in exactly the same fashion. Knox's sermon at Crail, in which he invited his hearers either to die as men or to live victorious, was followed by an attack upon the church,—the audience being so moved that they immediately pulled down all the altars and images in the town. At St Andrews, in like manner, the discourse on the purgation of the Temple being finished, the provost and bailies did thereupon agree to remove all monuments of idolatry, "which also they did with expedition." The Cathedral Church was sacked, and the monasteries of the Black and Grey Friars razed to the ground. The "reformation" of the monks of

Lindores took place about the same time,—“their altars overthrown, their idols, vestments of idolatry, and mass-books burnt in their ain presence,”—to the great contentment of the Reformer. “O that my heart could be thankful for the super-excellent benefit of my God! The long thirst of my wretched heart is satisfied in abundance; for now forty days and more hath my God used my tongue to the manifestation of His glory.”

Emboldened by the support they had received, the Congregation, with Knox in their midst, began their march upon Edinburgh. They paused for a day at Perth,—the scene of the earliest reformation,—and spent their leisure not unprofitably. The Abbey and Palace of Scone, the most venerable monuments in Scotland, were within easy reach. By a curious fatality, the rascal multitude, in spite of the restraint of Knox’s presence, were again in the mood for mischief. “So was the Abbey and Palace appointed to saccage; in the doing whereof they took no long deliberation, but committed the whole to the merciment of fire.” At Stirling the churches were purged, the monasteries wrecked, the Abbey of Cambuskenneth cast down. The like was done the third day after at Linlithgow. At Edinburgh, where Lord Seton was provost, “a man without God, without honesty, and often

times without reason," some preparation had been made for the protection and defence of the monasteries; but on the approach of the Congregation Seton deserted his charge,—leaving, as Knox remarks, "the spoil to the poor, who had," he continues, "made havoc of all such things as was moveable before our coming, and had left nothing but bare walls, yea, not so much as door or window; wherethrough," he concludes, "we were the less troubled in putting order to such places."

It has been maintained that the Congregation was not responsible for these excesses. Neither Knox nor the Lords, it appears, were to blame,—the "rascal multitude," whom they were unable to control, being the real culprit. Though it is true that the Reformer professes on one occasion to be ashamed of his followers, the plea is not tenable, and cannot be admitted. The connection between a sermon by Knox and an act of destructive vandalism was as invariable as a natural law. The devastation, indeed, was the logical development of his policy of "Thorough." If the nests were pulled down, the rooks would not return. If the religious houses were dismantled, if the churches were desecrated, if the monuments of idolatry were defaced, any risk of reconciliation with "the pestilent prelates and their shavelings" would be

averted. That was his policy, and it was the policy which long after the occurrence of the first violent outbreak of popular passion was deliberately adopted by the responsible leaders of the movement. The Charterhouse was sacked on 11th May 1559; the Act for the demolition of cloisters and abbey churches was the work of the Convention which met at Edinburgh in May 1561. The execution of the Act was intrusted to the lay Lords; and, while neither Argyll nor the Prior of St Andrews can be accused of slackness, the Earl of Glencairn, by the prompt destruction of Paisley, Crossraguel, and Kilwinning, appears to have secured the honours of the day. The main incidents of the campaign of 1561 have been very vividly described by Spottiswoode,—“Thereupon ensued a pitiful vastation of churches and church-buildings throughout all the parts of the realm; for every one made bold to put to their hands, the meaner sort imitating the ensample of the greater and those who were in authority. No difference was made, but all the churches were either defaced or pulled to the ground. The holy vessels, and whatever else men could make gain of—timber, lead, and bells—were put to sale. The very sepulchres of the dead were not spared. The registers of the church and bibliothèques were cast into the fire. In a word, all was ruined; and what had escaped

in the time of the first tumult, did now undergo the common calamity; which was so much the worse, that the violences committed at this time were coloured with the warrant of public authority."

The poverty of Protestant Scotland in sacred buildings "whose walls have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity" is sufficiently accounted for by these deplorable incidents. It has recently been urged, indeed, that not only are ruins, and especially Gothic ruins, fragrant with wallflower and mantled with ivy, extremely attractive (as if Knox and his followers in casting down churches had designed merely to gratify the taste for the picturesque which a later age might develop), but that the ancient churches have suffered more from the ignorant neglect of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than from the angry iconoclasm of the sixteenth. The argument of course is in one sense valid; but in one sense only—for it must not be forgotten that the state of feeling which allowed the minsters to crumble away without remonstrance or remorse was directly due to the teaching of the Reformers. The stones in many cases may not have been actually dislodged by Knox or Glencairn; but the people had been taught that these were the synagogues of Satan in which "Baal's shaven

sort" had practised their abominations; and the deserted building came to be regarded not only with pious dislike but with superstitious horror. The popular fancy associated the kirk-yard where the "auld Papists" were buried with the pranks of hobgoblins and the witches' midnight revel: to the ploughman hurrying along after dark with averted eye the place became "uncanny"; and in course of time the rank growth of thistles and nettles formed a natural barrier which few cared to cross. Then came the troopers of Cromwell,—as destructive in their grim deliberate fashion as Knox's passionate vandals; the wind blew, the rain beat; and now, one comely fragment, now, another, came down with a crash which startled the village. This is the history of more than one of the vast edifices which yet later on, when the lands round about were enclosed, served as quarries for the farmers' dikes; but if the devout catholic sentiment, the profound feeling of awe and reverence which the house of God inspired, had not been wantonly disturbed, such a history could not have been written. Some of the preachers came to see that they had made an enormous mistake; Knox himself confessed, the year before his death, that the barns and "sheep-cots"—for they were little better—in which public worship had been held since the demoli-

tion of the abbeys, were scandalously unfit for such a purpose.

To return. After the march on Edinburgh there was a pause. The iconoclastic passion had exhausted its first force; the wave had spent itself. The Congregation could not maintain the position it had taken, and was ultimately compelled to fall back, the Hamiltons upon Glasgow, Ruthven and the others upon Stirling and Perth. The Regent took advantage of the respite to fortify Leith; and Leith as a base of action for her troops, as well as a city of refuge for herself, was invaluable. The Protestant Lords, alarmed by the rapidity with which the works were pushed on, angrily demanded what she meant? Her answer was not wanting in dignity and pathos. "And like as a small bird being pursued will provide itself some nest, so her Grace could do no less in case of pursuit, but provide some sure retreat for herself and her company." Then she spoke rather bitterly of their dealings with the English Queen,—their disloyalty to their native sovereign. The Lords, however, were rude and dogged; they were not men to be touched by any graces of style or felicity of appeal; and apprehending that the peril was imminent, they again called their retainers to arms and advanced on the capital. But after several weeks' skirmishing, having failed to make any impression

upon the walls of Leith, they became disheartened, their force melted away, and in spite of a sermon from Knox and an earnest appeal from Maitland (who had now joined them), they determined to return to Stirling. They had ventured some weeks before in a solemn assembly to depose the Regent; Knox had been called in; the Old Testament had been ransacked, and the precedents duly considered. It appeared that in deposing of princes, God did not always use His immediate power, but sometimes used other means which His wisdom thought good and justice approved. "As by Asa He removed Maacha his own mother from honour and authority which before she had brooked; by Jehu He destroyed Joram and the whole posterity of Achab; by diverse others He had deposed from authority those whom before He had established by His own word." This daring act, this deliberate defiance of the sovereign authority, had at the moment been received with acclamation by the citizens of Edinburgh: but the citizens of Edinburgh were as fickle as they were fierce; and on the sixth of November the discredited allies left the capital at midnight amid the gibes and jeers of the inconstant populace. "The spiteful tongues of the wicked railed upon us, calling us traitors and heretics; every one provoked other to cast stones at us. One cried, 'Alas that

I might see!’—another ‘Fye, advertise the French, and we shall help them now to cut the throats of these heretics.’ So were the cogitations of many hearts revealed. For we would never have believed that our natural countrymen and women could have wished our destruction so unmercifully, and have so rejoiced in our adversity. God move their hearts to repentance!” On this as on many other occasions, the Reformers had to confess sorrowfully that “the hearts of the people were against the professors.” These manifestations of popular disfavour were, to Knox especially, peculiarly galling.

At Stirling Knox resumed the interrupted discourse; the text was taken from the eightieth Psalm: “O God of hosts, turn us again; make Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved”; and the sermon itself rings like martial music. By its stirring and piercing eloquence, its confident appeal to the Eternal, “the minds of men began wondrously to be erected”; and at its close a momentous resolution was taken,—momentous to Scotland, to England, to Europe. “In the end it was concluded that William Maitland should pass to London to expone our estate and condition to the Queen and Council.”

Sadler was the stormy petrel of Scottish politics, and it was of evil omen that he was again at Berwick. It was now November, and we have

seen (from the Regent's letter) that during the autumn months informal communications had passed between the insurgent Lords and the English Court. Cecil was eager to take advantage of the opening; but Elizabeth hesitated. The deposition of sovereigns by their subjects was not at all to her taste. It might grow dangerous if it became a habit, and the infection spread. The moderate party in Scotland had been overborne by the fanatical Calvinistic faction; and, constitutionally cautious, she detested fanaticism nearly as much as she detested Calvinism. The Revolution so far had been the handiwork of Knox; and Knox she hated. The Congregation had shown no capacity for political organisation; inflated with spiritual pride, they had been arrogantly confident in prosperity, and helplessly incapable in defeat. Were these the allies on whose firmness and constancy she could rely,—these “men of butter,” as Alva called the Reformers? But Cecil was urgent, and Elizabeth, “greater than man, less than woman,” caring for her safety more than for her scruples, never allowed her feminine antipathies to override her masculine common-sense. Sadler was the confidant of the English Council; and, with anxious instructions to deal warily, he was despatched to Berwick to reconnoitre and report.

One initial difficulty presented itself—With whom was he to treat? What envoy from an insurgent faction would be welcomed at Greenwich or Westminster? Knox was the real leader: the Lords not being ready writers, he seems at first to have conducted, under the *nom de plume* of Sinclair (his mother's name), nearly the whole correspondence,—“in twenty-four hours I have not four or five to natural rest, and ease of this wicked carcass”; but Knox was out of the question. One sometimes wishes that Elizabeth and Knox had met; the interview, it cannot be doubted, would have formed a lively, possibly a stormy, episode in the History of the Reformation. The mere sound of his name drove Elizabeth wild. The “Monstrous Regiment of Women” was an unpardonable affront, which she had not forgotten, and which she never forgave. He had made a clumsy effort to apologise; but an apology from Knox was very like a sound rating from another man; and the maladroit letter which he wrote—judiciously suppressed by Cecil—would only have increased her choler. A prophet charged to announce the judgment of the Lord occupies a difficult position when he has to own that he has made a mistake: and it was hardly to be expected that a retreat in such circumstances should have been graciously or gracefully executed. When he told Cecil that,

“being overcome with iniquity”—“a traitor to God, and worthy of hell”—“ye have followed the world in the way of perdition, and shall taste of the same cup that politic heads have drunken before you,” he did not mean to be rude; and Cecil, who could estimate prophetic warnings at their true value, probably did not mind. But when he was required to signify to his haughty and passionate mistress that, although “contrary to nature and without her deserving” (seeing that she had “declined from Jesus Christ in the day of His battle”), she had been raised to the throne of England, yet if she would confess that “the extraordinary dispensation of God’s great mercy had made that lawful to her which both nature and God’s law did deny unto all women,” her authority would be provisionally admitted, the prudent Minister felt that it was time to interpose. Sadler was warned to keep the truculent prophet well out of sight. “Of all others, Knox’s name, if it be not Goodman’s, is most odious here; and therefore I wish no mention of him hither;”¹ and Cecil’s own impatience with these ill-timed admonitions

¹ This was written on the 31st October; on the 3d of November he returns to the subject,—“Surely I like not Knox’s audacity. His writings do no good here.” A more adroit envoy was obviously needed; and at this very time Lethington’s services became available.

found expression in a characteristic reply: "Maister Knox, Maister Knox! Non est masculus neque foemina, omnes enim, ut ait Paulus, unum sumus in Christo Jesu. Benedictus vir qui confidit in Domino; et erit Dominus fiducia ejus."

The adhesion of Maitland changed the whole aspect of affairs. It gave the conduct of the revolutionary movement to a skilled and trained diplomatist; but it did more. So long as he remained with the Regent, it might be taken as an assurance that she had not broken with, or been deserted by, the moderate reforming party. When the Queen's Secretary, on the other hand, went over to the rebels, it was a significant declaration that French soldiers and foreign ecclesiastics had rendered a policy of conciliation hopeless. Maitland had no sympathy with either extreme; but he was forced to make his choice. Practical statesmen cannot be unduly finical. They must not cling with fastidious tenacity to what they hold to be the best. In this imperfect world it is seldom the best way that succeeds—only the second best; and the second best must be accepted as the line on which social and political movement of any kind is possible. Maitland, besides, was already, as I have said, a familiar figure at the English Court. He had acquired, or was to acquire, a

personal ascendancy over Elizabeth which even Cecil never possessed. Elizabeth bore with Cecil because she could not help herself; but the puritanic quality of his mind, and the puritanic flavour of his speech, were always distasteful to her, and she sneered irreverently at her faithful Secretary and "his brothers in Christ." She was a bit of a pagan, and so was Maitland; and the gallant address and gay wisdom of "the flower of the wits of Scotland" were relished by her to the last. Knox admits that in his mission the Secretary "travailed with no less wisdom and faithfulness than happy success"; and the Convention of Berwick—an English fleet in the Firth of Forth under Winter, an English army before Leith under Lord Grey—was the first fruits of his diplomacy.

Enough has been written about the siege of Leith and the Treaty of Edinburgh; yet it is interesting to watch, from such a coign of vantage as Sadler occupied during these anxious months, the game that was being played; and I may briefly note some of the more striking incidents recorded day by day in the voluminous correspondence that has been preserved. Berwick was the point on which the roads from Newcastle, Carlisle, and Edinburgh converged; and though lying close to the turbulent Border country, its strong English garrison, as well as the

easy communication it enjoyed both by land and sea, alike with England and Scotland, made it a place of the first importance, especially when war was imminent, or intrigue rife. The dull and peaceful life which Sadler and Norfolk appear to have led while the negotiations with Lethington were in progress contrasts curiously with the organised anarchy which prevailed, and the constant strife which was being waged, outside the walls. "It is more than thirty years ago," Sadler wrote to Cecil, "since I had some understanding of this frontier, and yet did I never know it in such disorder; for now the officer spoileth the thief, and the thief robbeth the true man, and the true men take assurance of the thieves that they shall not rob them, and give them yearly rent and tribute for the same." There was much complaint of the delay and negligence of the "posts"; yet letters either from the Council at London or from the Lords at Stirling appear to have arrived daily. The fortress of Berwick was built above the Tweed, where the salt water mingles with the fresh, and commanded a wide sweep of land and sea. "This morning is past by here a great ship in which it is supposed that the Frenchman is." "I would to God ye had been more forward in time. There is passed by here eleven sails in sight, which we take to be French." "Hourly

we look for the arrival of the ships." "This day there is passed by here twenty-seven or twenty-eight sail of ships; we are in good hope that it is the ordnance, which will much avail." "Because the way and passage through Lothian is very difficile, we have sent the Laird of Brunstone by Carlisle." "The treasure could not be carried but in carts, for which the country serveth not. This was in pence, two pence, and old Testones. For God's sake send it in gold or new silver."¹ These slight homely touches serve to vitalise the scene; we can see the anxious envoys of Elizabeth in the chilly Border town ("Our winds here being rather winter winds than summer winds," Norfolk writes as late as 15th May) watching the white sails of the craft that crept along the coast, or the gleam of the Border spears.

The spring of 1560 must have been unusually late; but 1559 had also been a backward year. On the 8th September Balnaves arrived at Berwick, when it transpired that the Reformers had been hindered by the lateness of the harvest,—as the destruction of the standing corn, which could not have been avoided in the event of a rising, would have turned the people against them. Alexander Whitelaw followed on the

¹ Letters from Sadler and Norfolk, 27th Sept., 19th Dec. | 1559, 7th Jan., 20th Jan., 18th April, 27th April 1560.

29th with the information that the Congregation were unable to meet until 15th October,—“they could appoint no shorter day, as their harvest by reason of foul weather is far behind, and not a quarter done.”

The interest of the winter and spring centred in Maitland. His mission to England was regarded by Sadler and Norfolk, as well as by Randolph and Cecil, as of supreme importance. The Englishmen at Berwick had had, it must be confessed, a difficult part to play. While solemnly assuring the Regent that Elizabeth was her very good friend, they were secretly to encourage and succour the rebels. Arran was smuggled across the Border with a forged passport prepared by Cecil, in which he was described as “M. de Beaufort, a gentleman of our good brother the French King’s, sent into Scotland to our good sister the Queen Dowager.” The Congregation were told that they should “devise such ways whereby they might be helped by us, and yet we to remain in peace as we do”; Sadler was to lend them money secretly, taking the bonds in his own name, “so that the Queen should not be a party thereto”; the money was to be in French crowns, “for if it be in any English coin, it will be the sooner suspected from whom they have it.” Despite of every precaution the perfidy got wind, and Cecil had to warn

his "brothers in Christ" to be more circumspect,—"of all others," he adds contemptuously, "of all others, these Scots be the openest men that be." But the harder the lying, the more unctuous the language. "And so I take my leave, praying Almighty God to make you the instrument of His true honour, against Anti-Christ, the perpetual enemy of His dear Son, our Saviour Christ." No writer of legitimate comedy could have ventured upon so broad or farcical a contrast; and yet, as I have said before, the men were perfectly sincere. It is difficult to define with precision the moral and mental characteristics of the duplicity which deceives itself; but whatever term we may select to designate their double-dealing, we cannot justly, I think, call it hypocrisy.

It became obvious, however, before the winter was far advanced, that the show of neutrality could not be preserved much longer, and that a decisive step one way or other would require to be taken. So Lethington's movements were closely scanned, and his coming eagerly awaited. There were a number of false alarms. Randolph, writing on 9th November from Stirling, informed Sadler that Maitland had received his despatch, and would be at Berwick within eight days at furthest. But a week passed and he did not arrive. Sadler began to fancy that he had gone

by the West Marches,—the Carlisle route, where the Maxwells were strong, being then deemed the safest. A few days later, however, he wrote to Cecil that Lethington was certainly coming, for whose secret conveyance to Court, by the coast road, he would provide what was necessary. “Things must rest awhile until you see what he bringeth. The Lords wait for his answer.” On the 21st the envoy was still *en route*. “Lethington and Randolph will be here as soon as wind and weather will serve. Nothing is known till Lethington come, whom we look for hourly. We shall send Captain Randall back in the boat that brings him.” On the 22d there is “continual expectation of Lethington’s arrival”; and on the 23d “Lethington is still hourly looked for; he is supposed to be detained by the Regent’s death, of which the brute continueth. The wind hath served so well, he should otherwise have been here.” Then in a letter from Randolph the delay was explained,—they had been detained by Arran’s sickness, who for four days was “sore troubled” (whether it had been bodily or mental “trouble” does not appear; the taint of insanity may have begun to show itself), and on the 24th they landed at Holy Island. “On Thursday last, Lethington and Randolph arrived at Holy Island, and when the night came we received them secretly into the

Castle here." Maitland, who frankly admitted to Sadler that without an English army the contest was hopeless, left for London before day-break of the twenty-fifth.

The negotiations proceeded rapidly ; but Maitland's instructions were not sufficiently definite, and Melville went back to Scotland to ascertain the resolution of the Lords on certain points, taking with him a letter from Maitland to Sadler, the seal of which—a serpent entwined round a cross placed upon a skull, between the letters R. P.—is still unbroken. The Council, however, did not wait for Melville's return ; Winter's ships were in readiness, and on the twenty-third of December the fleet sailed. Cecil was unusually elated. "Our ships be on the seas, God speed them!—God give you both good night, for I am almost asleep (12 P.M.)" But the wind was contrary. So late as the sixth of January, there had been no tidings of them at Berwick, and the rumour ran that they had been driven back. "The messenger from the Lords with the double of Lethington's articles has arrived. He was eight days on the sea, and could not land till yesternight, which he did at Holy Island with much difficulty and danger. No news of Mr Winter, which would be great comfort." Winter in fact did not reach the Forth till the afternoon of the twenty-second,

when he had been four weeks at sea,—even for that age an unusually protracted voyage.

Lethington remained in London till the middle of February, in constant communication with Cecil, whose confidence he entirely gained. He had engaged to meet the English and Scottish Commissioners at Berwick, and he brought with him a cordial letter from Elizabeth's Secretary. "Good Mr Sadler, you have known this bearer, the Laird of Lethington, but I here have had great profit of him, finding him to be both wise, honest, and constant. I pray you let him receive your friendly entertainment, with some addition for my sake. God send us a good end of your ministerial labours. Time serveth all turns, and loss of time loseth all good things."¹ Lethington was the first to arrive. "Yesternight," Norfolk wrote on the morning of the 24th, "arrived here the Laird of Lethington, and at the same instant came also the Master of Maxwell from Carlisle; but the rest of the Lords which come by sea are not yet arrived, by reason that the winds are contrary."

¹ Lethington had written to Sadler from London on 11th January thanking him for his services. "Ye have enterit my hail nation in obligation to you; and I hope it shall prove at length ye have also weil de-

servit of your awin country. I look for the Queen's final answer and my despatch to-morrow; quilk obtainin I will make speed towards you. Cecil is writing. I am in good hope."

The letter, however, was not sealed when the Scottish deputies appeared. "One of the Queen's Majesty's ships named *The Falcon* is arrived here in the haven-mouth with the Lord James and the rest of the Lords of Scotland, for whom we have presently sent out boats to bring them to land." The Convention of Berwick was duly signed and sealed, among the rest by "William Maytlande of Lethingtoun, younger." Maitland immediately returned to London, where he remained for some weeks. "Because they require certain promises under the great seal, they have determined to send the Lord of Lydington to be a humble suitor to her Grace. Surely we find them grave and discreet men, unwilling to promise more than they can perform;" and ready to acknowledge that without English aid they were unable to resist the French. About *that* there could now be no doubt. It abundantly appears from the report of the conferences that in attempting to subvert the established government and the established religion, the Congregation had undertaken a task beyond its strength.

Even against a considerable English army, the handful of French made a gallant stand. "The Scots can scale no walls;" but on this occasion the taunt might have been directed with equal justice against their allies. The ill-success was attributed to the incapacity of Lord Grey, who,

it was insinuated, might lead a troop of horse, but was not fit for so great a command. Norfolk, who was very sore at the miscarriage, and who had expressed himself strongly against the general's mistaken tactics in the conduct of the siege, was forced to offer a doubtful apology to his colleague.—“Grey is nowise to blame, except it be for that he has not his wits, and memory faileth him.”

The tenacity with which the French clung to their rotten walls was quite unlooked for. Elizabeth had expected a holiday promenade, an easy “walk over”; and it seemed now that the enterprise might prove costly in more senses than one. Conscientious were reinforced by parsimonious scruples. She began to repent. She had listened to evil counsels. Cecil's advice had led her astray. Cecil, for his part, was not anxious to prolong a war which was hardly justified by the usages of nations, and which, if prolonged, might involve larger issues than he cared to raise. If the French would leave the Scots to settle their own affairs, the English army would be withdrawn. The extreme men, the fanatical visionaries who had dreams of a New Republic, a *Civitas Dei*, a theocracy in Church and State, inveighed bitterly against the terms of the treaty; but they were forced to give way. Cecil himself came down to Edinburgh, where,

with Maitland's assistance, he succeeded in bringing the various factions to an accord.

The French Commissioners were reasonable enough; they even agreed to an article affecting Mary's title to the English succession, which was clearly outside their commission, and which was subsequently the occasion of endless controversy; the impracticable preachers were the difficulty. No official record of the claims they urged has been preserved; but it is plain that Cecil's patience was severely tried by their unreasonableness. At one time he was almost tempted to leave them to fight it out among themselves,—“we have to deal with so crooked and subtle a nation,” he exclaimed impatiently, unconsciously repeating the words which Sadler had used twenty years before. Some of the Lords, indeed, “to the hazard of their lives and land,” would listen to reason; but the preachers and the fanatical leaders of the Congregation were stubborn as mules. “I find the Lord of Lethington disposed to work the minds of the nobility to anything that your Majesty shall determine. He is of most credit here for his wit” (or *policy*, as we would say), “and almost sustaineth the whole burden of government.” “We find a great commodity in the Lord James and the Lord Lethington, who be well content to follow our opinions in everything. Surely the Lord

James is a gentleman of great worthiness." Two days later the prospect had not brightened. "Our travail, and especially mine, is more with the Lords of Scotland than with the French. I find some so deeply persuaded in the matter of religion, as nothing can persuade them that may appear to hinder it. My Lord of Lethington, whose capacity and credit is worth six others, helpeth much in this, or else surely I see folly would hazard the whole."¹

Maitland's moderation was all the more welcome, because he had at first been inclined to hold that a premature and inconclusive peace would be injurious. He had made Lady Cecil's acquaintance when in London, and a close friendship had sprung up between them. In more than one letter to her the distrust of "communications" is forcibly accentuated. But he had come to see that any violent disturbance of the existing polity would be of doubtful advantage. The Dowager's discernment had not been at fault when she said that though the Congregation at first did rise for matters of religion, they afterwards shot at another mark; and Balnaves candidly admitted to Sadler that the mark they shot at was, as he phrased it, "an alteration of the state and authority." Cecil, who in the privacy

¹ Cecil, 19th, 23d, and 25th June 1560.

of his study was ready to argue that the Crown of England had a just and unfeigned title to the superiority of Scotland, and that the French Queen, as Queen of Scots, owed homage to the Queen of England, was much too discreet to proclaim such a doctrine from the housetops. The line that he took in public was to suggest that if Mary declined to accept the reforms which were proposed by the nobility, the government should be intrusted to the next heirs ; and that if she should refuse to recognise the Hamiltons, then—but I must use his own words—"it is apparent that Almighty God is pleased to transfer from her the rule of the kingdom for the weal of it,"—a rapid and daring feat of logic. But if it came to be a conflict between the rival houses, there could be little doubt—Maitland must have felt—that the great majority of the people, the temporary irritation against France having subsided, would prefer a Stuart to a Hamilton, the historic family to the family of an upstart. If Elizabeth, indeed, could have been persuaded to accept Arran, an alliance which placed a Scottish noble upon the English throne might have proved an acceptable solution of the puzzle. But Maitland knew that Arran was a violent half-witted lad in whom the hereditary incapacity had developed into specific mental disease ; and he knew, moreover, that the shrewd Elizabeth rated him at his

true value. Such a marriage would certainly never take place; and even as a marriage *de convenance*, was hardly perhaps to be desired. Then there was the Prior of St Andrews—Mary's brother—who was supposed to aspire to the Crown, and whose name at least had been included in the list of possible claimants. Of the Lord James we shall hear much hereafter; here it is enough to say that Margaret Erskine (who was carried off by James the Fifth on the very morning of her marriage with Douglas of Lochleven—so the story ran) was alleged by some to be the King's lawful wife. Maitland might possibly have preferred the Lord James; but, upon the whole, he appears to have arrived at the conclusion that a provisional government in Mary's name was in the meantime the more prudent alternative, and that, till public opinion was more matured, and the public mind better informed, any fundamental alteration of the "state and authority" should be delayed. Maitland was not an idealist; for him the visionary Republic had no attractions; but in the present mood of the populace it was extremely probable that some grotesque scheme of government might be adopted. It was better, therefore, to wait; and another consideration may have had its weight. The Queen of France could never be Queen of Scots; she might keep the name, but the power would remain with the

Scottish executive council : on the other hand, Francis was feeble and ailing ; and by-and-by Mary might be able—a free woman, no longer entangled by foreign ties—to return to her native land.

The faction which had been eager for political as well as religious change had, however, little reason to complain. The French Commissioners, indeed, would not meddle with “religion,”—dropping it like a hot potato, which was sure to burn whoever touched it ; but they consented to the meeting of a Parliament in which the needful reforms might be deliberately considered. Of this Parliament the advanced party gained, as might indeed have been expected, complete control. The legality of its composition was open to exception (the whole of the lesser gentry of Fife and the Lothians attached to the Congregation were present in a compact body,—an entire innovation undoubtedly upon constitutional practice), and the Conservative party refrained from any act of participation which could afterwards be construed as an admission that it had been lawfully summoned or was lawfully constituted. The Earl of Athol, Lord Somerville, and Lord Borthwick declared that they would believe as their fathers had believed before them ; but, with no formal protest, and with hardly a reclaiming voice, the ancient Church was abolished.

The Parliament was opened by Maitland, who took the place which Huntly, conveniently detained at home by "an infirmity in his leg," should have occupied. The address of the "har-rangue-maker," as the Scots called the Speaker of their Parliament, was modest and restrained. "Silence being commanded, the Lord of Liding-ton began his oration. He excused his insufficiency to occupy that place. He made a brief discourse of things past, and of what necessity men were forced to for the defence of their country, what remedy and support it pleased God to send them in the time of their necessity, how much they were bound heartily to acknowledge it and to requite it. He took away the persuasion that was in many men's minds who held back, and who wrongly supposed that other things were meant than those that were attempted. He advised the Estates to lay all local affections aside, and to lend themselves wholly to the true service of God and of their country. He urged them to remember in what state Scotland had been of long time for lack of government and exercise of justice. He exhorted them to mutual amity and hearty friendship, and to live with one another as members of one body. He prayed God long to maintain this peace and amity between sovereign princes, and especially betwixt the realms of England and

Scotland in the fear of God; and so ended." The purpose of the speech was obvious: it was a studiously moderate appeal to the moderate men in either camp; an appeal to the men of order as against the men of anarchy; an appeal to the men of common-sense as against the men of dreams and visions. Whether the proceedings of the Parliament were in accord with Maitland's real sentiments, we are not expressly informed. He was well aware that a radical reconstruction of the ecclesiastical polity would be demanded, and so far as existing institutions were indefensible, he was anxious that they should be radically reformed. Beyond this he was not prepared to go. A theocracy headed by Knox was just as distasteful to him as a theocracy headed by Beaton or Hamilton. It has sometimes occurred to me that the expedient, by which the preachers were diverted from the preparation of a scheme of civil and ecclesiastical polity until Parliament had been dissolved, was devised by Maitland. For Christianity, as a system of doctrine, Lethington, it is plain, cared not at all. He was not an unbeliever. In Scotland, in the sixteenth century, the man who had ventured to suggest, even tentatively, that God was a "bogle of the nursery," would have been stoned to death. But Maitland, who understood Knox's foibles, was well aware that the preparation of a Confession of

Faith, of a compendious manual of doctrinal theology, of a series of speculative propositions on the relations between God and man, was a temptation which the Reformers could not resist. It was a duty which, on the slightest provocation, they would "gladly undertake." There were no end of ticklish practical questions requiring the most delicate handling; if, while these were in course of solution, the preachers could be induced to enter the thorny theological labyrinth, might it not be well? Might it not be attended with advantage to all concerned? That Maitland attached no particular sanctity to the articles of belief which were then formulated is clear enough; he was ready to throw them overboard without even a pretence of reluctance: if Elizabeth, he told Cecil, would only specify those that she disliked (for a Calvinistic confession stank in her nostrils), he would have them recast without delay. Knox's Confession is a singular document: weak and disingenuous when it attempts to define the grounds on which an authoritative Protestant creed can be constructed,—“the Notes by which the true Church is discerned from the false,”—weak, that is to say, on the logical and argumentative side, it rises into that impressive eloquence, that intense emotional fervour and force of spiritual expression, of which Knox was a master, when it treats of the assur-

ance of faith, of the immortality of the soul, of the resurrection of the body. "In the general judgment there shall be given to every man and woman resurrection of the body. For the sea shall give up her dead, the earth these that be therein enclosed; yea, the Eternal, our God, shall stretch out His hand on the dust, and the dead shall arise incorruptible, and that in the substance of the self-same flesh that every man now beareth, to receive, according to their works, glory or punishment. For such as now delight in vanity, cruelty, filthiness, superstition, or idolatry, shall be adjudged to the fire unquenchable, in which they shall be tormented for ever, as well in their own bodies as in their souls, which now they give to serve the devil in all abomination. But such as continue in well-doing to the end, boldly professing the Lord Jesus, we constantly believe that they shall receive glory, honour, and immortality, to reign for ever in life everlasting with Christ Jesus, to whose glorified body all his elect shall be made like, when he shall appear again in judgment, and shall render up the kingdom to God his Father, who then shall be, and ever shall remain, in all things, God blessed for ever." This is the poetry of theology: its science may be contemptible and incredible; but the broad moral truth that death is the wages of sin has never

been more forcibly expressed or intensely realised. Upon the whole, Maitland appears to have done his best, where civil rights and civil interests were involved, to restrain the impetuous fanaticism of the Assembly. He did not always succeed; it is difficult to believe, for instance, that he approved of the Act which made the celebration of the most solemn and indispensable rite of the Catholic Church punishable with death. A statute which provided that no persons should say mass, or hear mass, or be present thereat, under the pain of confiscation of their goods and punishment of their bodies for the first fact, banishment out of the realm for the second fact, and *death* for the third fact,—that was a statute which Lethington certainly did not draw. It was coined in another mint,—it bears the unmistakable impress of another hand. It was the work of the man who cast out “the monuments of idolatry,” and committed the abbeys to “the merciment of the fire.”

Even at this early period the friction between Knox and Maitland, between the inspired prophet of the Lord and the tolerant scholar of the renaissance, had declared itself. Maitland's irony had the same effect on Knox that the red flag of a matador has on a bull. It was so deft, so keen, so incisive, that it touched him before he was aware. He manifests a quite unusual air

of helplessness while this agile foe dances round him,—pricking him before and behind, on this side and on that. He devotes a copious and entirely original comminatory service to Maitland;—the mocker (he is prophetically assured) will suffer for his “mockage,” here and hereafter, in this world and in the next. I have said that the Reformed preachers were extraordinarily sensitive,—resenting with more than papal authoritativeness the most innocent badinage directed against themselves or their office. But Maitland’s shafts went home. He was not a jester only; the light play of his wit masked serious conviction and deliberate policy. Though the prophet who can interpret the obscure oracles of the Most High is not as a rule oppressed with humility, it cannot be said that Knox was vainer than his brethren. It was no doubt, however, rather mortifying to learn that the Secretary of State, instead of being impressed by the special and vehement application of the prophet Haggeus, had shrugged his shoulders, and treated the discourse with undisguised and unbecoming levity,—“We must now forget ourselves, and bear the barrow to build the houses of God”; or to have been told to his face that the Book of Discipline, the scheme of Church government which had been so anxiously prepared, was a “deyout imagina-

tion." It is clear that these speeches stung Knox to the quick; and the reason is plain. Had they come from another man, they would have meant little; coming from a keen and liberal thinker like Maitland, they were significant of much. They were the first notes of adverse criticism,—the earliest intimation that the severe ecclesiastical regimen which the Reformers intended to prescribe would not be accepted without remonstrance, and that the affirmation of their claim to bind and to loose on earth and in heaven, as the Pope of Rome before them had bound and loosed, would not be readily granted. The Papal jurisdiction had been abolished because its spiritual pretensions had become intolerable; it is amusing, if rather saddening, to reflect that the first business of the leaders of the infant society was to construct an elaborate form of—excommunication.¹

¹ These are the words of excommunication,—After the offender is cut off, secluded, and excommunicated from the body of Christ and the society of the church,—“And this his sin, by virtue of our ministry we bind, and pronounce the same to be bound in heaven and earth. We further give over into the hands and power of the devil the said A B to the destruction of his flesh; straitly charging

all that profess the Lord Jesus, to repute and to hold him accursed, and unworthy of the familiar society of Christians; declaring unto all men that such as hereafter, before his repentance, shall haunt or familiarly accompany him are partakers of his impiety, and subject to the like condemnation.” A tolerably comprehensive “cursing” for a Church six months old.

The provisional settlement which had been arrived at, the interim *modus vivendi* in politics and religion, could not possibly have been permanent. What the future had in store for Scotland, supposing that the French king had lived, we can only conjecture. But all was changed in a day by the death of the feeble Francis. The Reformers made "merry" over the sufferings of Mary Stuart's husband, as they had made "merry" over the sufferings of Mary Stuart's mother. "Lo! the potent hand of God from above sends unto us a wonderful and most joyful deliverance; for unhappy Francis, husband to our sovereign, suddenly perisheth of a rotten ear—that deaf ear that never would hear the truth of God." The exultation was premature; the merriment was short-lived. The death of Francis restored the daughter of James the Fifth to her own people; and for the next ten years the history of Scotland is the history of Mary Stuart.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

MARY STUART AND ELIZABETH TUDOR.

THE legal status of Elizabeth Tudor was a puzzling question which the astutest lawyer would have failed to settle—to his own satisfaction. Was she the lawful daughter of Henry VIII., and therefore in right to the English Crown?—or was she a bastard without any rights whatever? Her wilful father, according to his mood, had advocated either view,—she was legitimate or illegitimate, as it suited the whim or policy of the moment. The Catholic princes, indeed, were substantially agreed that, on the death of Mary Tudor, the Scottish great-granddaughter of Henry VII. was the rightful heir; but Elizabeth was now *de facto*, if not *de jure*, Queen of England, and she had the whole Protestant world at her back. The assumption of the English arms by Mary was an impolitic act, for which she invariably declared that she was not responsible. The heralds

might argue that as by the rules of their craft she was entitled as next heir to bear the arms, the assumption did not imply any claim, direct or indirect, to the crown during Elizabeth's life; and even the style of "Queen of England" could hardly, with any show of logic or sense of humour, be resented by the sovereign, who had ventured to call herself "Queen of France." But what at another time might have been disregarded as frivolous technicality or petulant *tu quoque*, became as matters stood a grave political indiscretion; Elizabeth was justified in resenting it; and if the Treaty of Edinburgh had been confined to the settlement of a well-grounded complaint, Mary could not have objected. But, as we shall find, it went much further, and the article was so framed that it might be construed (I confess that I do not see how it can be read in any other sense) as an absolute renunciation in all time coming—even in the event of Elizabeth dying without issue—of her right to the English succession. If this was the concession which Cecil obtained by "a brawling message" to the French commissioners, he did not gain much in the end; for Mary quietly but persistently refused to confirm a treaty by which her title had been thoughtlessly or fraudulently signed away.

I have now reached the point where the

struggle—the long and bitter struggle—between Mary Stuart and Elizabeth Tudor may be said to have begun.

The story—I suppose we may venture to say the immortal story—of these women first took literary shape before the close of Elizabeth's reign. The unhappy Mary had been defeated and defamed; while round the triumphal chariot of her rival the huzzas and hosannahs of a grateful people welcomed "the good Queen Bess." Spenser, and a greater than Spenser, were in the throng; and their voices, like the pure notes of a great singer, rise above the confused babble and inarticulate clamour of the crowd. Round Shakespeare the most gifted of his contemporaries are like Liliputians round Gulliver; and we never realise how unique and incredible he is till we place them side by side. It is true, no doubt, that Spenser's portrait of Mary Stuart is not in his best manner. The contrast between the wise Mercilla and the false Duessa is too much in the style of the early painters, who strove to represent on one canvas the joys of heaven and the pains of hell. The lights as well as the shadows are too absolute—too Rembrandtesque; the features of the one are flattered, the features of the other are blackened and distorted, till neither one nor other is recognisable. On *this* hand we have

the peerless Mercilla, a maiden queen of high renown, the heir of ancient royalties and mighty conquerors, at whose feet kings and kaisers are proud to sit, her sword the minister of divine justice, her sceptre "the sacred pledge of peace and clemency with which high God had blest her happy land," who lets fall on her rival's neck, not the sword of the executioner, but "perling drops from her fair lamps of light," and who, when at length constrained to put her to death, mourns for her with more than needful natural remorse, and piously extends the last sad honours to her wretched corse. On *that* hand we have the false Duessa, who had treacherously plotted against the merciful Mercilla, who had wrought great and mickle mischief unto many a knight, whose face was marred by foul abuse and blotted by malignant passions, who had been guilty of Sedition and Impiety, of Incontinence and Murder. James the Sixth was very angry at what he held to be a thinly veiled insult to the memory of his mother; but it was hardly worth his while to complain as he did. For it must be confessed that while there are one or two impressive and imposing lines, the arraignment as a whole is altogether unworthy of the spiritual genius of Spenser in its higher moods. It is the coarse and crude polemic of a party scribe,—a gross and intemperate caricature.

How immeasurably superior is Shakespeare!
How perfect the form, how suave the tone,
how mellow the light! Courtly adulation never
wore a more fanciful dress, never offered a more
delicate worship:—

“But I might see young Cupid’s fiery dart
Quenched in the chaste beams of the wat’ry moon.
And the imperial votaress passed on
In maiden meditation fancy free,”

while the rebuke itself (the invective, if we
may call it invective) is almost as fine as the
flattery:—

“Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the sea-maid’s music.”¹

It is hardly necessary to say that the cult
of “the good Queen Bess” has long since died
out. From the moment that the State Papers
were made accessible to the public, its fate was
virtually sealed. No fervour of patriotism or
ardour of piety could replace the idol on the
pedestal from which it had been dislodged. It
was seen that the tears of the crocodile were less
false than these “perling drops.” The maiden
Queen of high renown, the fair vestal throned
by the west, proved to be a woman who in

¹ As early as 1567 we find Mary represented (in a rough caricature) as a mermaid,— Bothwell as a hare —Facsimiles of National MSS of England, Part III, No 63.

thought and deed was shamelessly unconscientious, and in thought, if not in deed, shamelessly immodest. The wise and just Mercilla swore like a trooper and lied like Lucifer. Without any charm of face or figure the imperial votaress was vainer than a peacock. Mean, avaricious, and mendacious ; hard, heartless, and fickle,—we see her now as she was ; and the picture is not one on which it is pleasant to look. But she had one supreme virtue—she succeeded ; and it is the strangest commentary upon the confused political state of Europe at the moment, when it can be said, and said with apparent truth, that only such a woman could have succeeded. If an honest, capable, clear-sighted sovereign had occupied the English throne during the years between 1560 and 1580, it is possible, nay probable, that the English Reformation might have been nipped in the bud. But there is a strength in folly as in weakness ; and Elizabeth's folly was so incalculable that it disarmed the most cunning combinations, and baffled the maturest foresight. Had there been a grain of honesty in her nature, or of consistency in her convictions, the Spanish fleet would not have sailed up the Channel twenty years too late. To the end of her life she was insincere with herself, and dishonest to all who served her. There is a study in one of Con-

greve's plays for which the elderly Elizabeth might have sat. It may be true that Congreve's muse was often artificial and meretricious ; but the picture of the godless old hag who kisses her hand to her gallant with a coquettish giggle while Death is lugging her away, who paints her skinny and withered cheeks while she is toppling over into the grave, is drawn by a master of tragic comedy. In such ghastly coquetries the last years of the woman who had braved the Vatican and wrecked the Armada passed away.

It cannot be denied, however, that Elizabeth could display on occasion the rough and hardy vigour of the Tudor. If she swore like a trooper, she was as insensible to physical fear or womanish tremors ; slippery as an eel so long as slipperiness would serve her turn, she stood her ground, when forced to the wall, with the tenacious and well-nigh heroic obstinacy of her race. Driven from her last covert—her mean trickeries, subterfuges, mendacities, detected, exposed, no longer of any avail—she would turn savagely upon her pursuers,—bidding them defiance with haughty port and reckless tongue. She was absolutely without conscience, and though perhaps not originally or intrinsically cruel, she had none of the sensitiveness of a high-strung and generous temperament. Thus she could be merciless without wincing, and (except, perhaps, at the very last)

remorse did not hurt her. Irritable and intractable on the surface, subject to gusts of passion that swept her off her feet, restrained by no large principles of duty either in religion or statecraft, her mental patience was indomitable and almost feline. With cat-like tenacity she clung, blindly, instinctively, ungraciously, against her will, to the line of policy—more or less clearly defined for her by Cecil—which kept her on the English throne.

But the Queen of Scots remains the central figure.

The character of Mary Stuart is one of those riddles which men will continue to read to the end—each in his own way. Where so many learned doctors have differed, it would be presumptuous and impertinent to dogmatise. No solution, it may be presumed, can now be altogether adequate; as the story proceeds, if every incident is related with perfect fairness and scrupulous accuracy, a more or less clear impression of her unique personality may be gained by the reader; but it is idle to hope that all difficulties can be smoothed away. Yet it appears to me, that while historians have not been slow to evolve for our instruction from their inner consciousness a consistent and more or less logical theory of her character and career, the direct testimony of contemporary observers

has been too much neglected. She was followed from her cradle to the scaffold by curious and critical eyes; statesmen, poets, diplomatists have recorded with eminent exactness, and sometimes with picturesque vivacity, the impression she produced upon them. It may be well in the meantime to hear what these witnesses have to say: by-and-by we may come to estimate how far the evidence of the men and women who saw her face to face verifies or invalidates the speculations of the closet.

Sir Ralph Sadler had much to do with Mary's later fortunes; and it is from his letters, curiously enough, that we get the first glimpse of the baby Queen. Sadler was one of the men who, by their industry, fidelity, and, it must be added, unscrupulousness, rendered important service to the English Government during the later Tudor *régime*—when such qualities were urgently needed. The confidential servant of Queen Elizabeth, the trusty agent of Cecil, was sincerely attached to the principles of the Reformers; but, like many of the Secretary's correspondents, Sadler was a man of business as well as a man of religion, and the business was not unfrequently of a kind which a man of honour would have hesitated to undertake. The moral obtuseness which enabled these statesmen to con-

duct the most questionable transactions without any sense of discomfort would not appear so singular to us, perhaps, had it been unaccompanied by unctuous fervour of language and puritanic rigour of judgment. One is inclined at first sight to conclude that the attitude of mind which Sir Ralph's correspondence discloses must have been more or less pharisaic. It was not so—the man was perfectly sincere; but the policy he was employed to forward being in accordance, as he believed, with the will of God and for the advancement of His kingdom, he failed altogether to perceive that the end did not sanctify the means. Absorbed in a mission which involved the highest interests of millions of human beings, in this world and in the next, the immorality of the intrigue faded out of sight. He perjured himself with a good conscience. He lied with the unction of an apostle.

Sadler had been in Scotland, as we have seen, when James the Fifth was living, and he has left us a lively picture of the King of the Commons and his Court. James, having sown his wild oats with ungrudging prodigality, was then leading a tranquil and temperate life with Marie of Lorraine. The noble ladies who had been honoured, or dishonoured, by the attentions of their king—Margaret Erskine, Elizabeth Carmichael, Eliza-

beth Shaw, Eupheme Elphinston—had been pensioned off or decently married; and sufficient provision, mainly taken from the revenues of the Church, had been made for the offspring of these fugitive amours. I have already had occasion to refer to Sadler's first official visit to Scotland, in connection with another chapter of this history: here it is enough to say that Henry's ambassador met with little success,—James refusing point-blank, as we have seen, to suppress the religious houses, and to enrich the Crown at their expense (after the English fashion) as his uncle had advised. Within a few months of James's death, Sadler was again at the Scottish Court,—engaged this time in a more doubtful and dangerous venture. The advantages of an English alliance would no doubt have been appreciated in course of time by the Scottish people; but Henry's arrogance and impatience were ruinous. Sadler was an able diplomatist; but even at his best he was no match for the great Cardinal; and on this occasion—heavily handicapped—he was badly beaten. The nation was in one of its sulky, irate, intractable moods; suspicious of England, suspicious of France; ready to pick a quarrel with the first comer, and to resent any affront, however slight and accidental, with more than ordinary warmth. Henry's imperious and dictatorial manner was

not calculated to soothe these nervous susceptibilities; and thus, between his master's urgency, the doubtful temper of the nobles who were yet in the main friendly to England, and the unacknowledged and impalpable but potent pressure of the astutest statesman of the age, Sadler was not happy. The widowed Queen was living at Linlithgow, and it was in the royal palace which her father had built that Sadler for the first time saw Mary Stuart. The Dowager, on her side, was suspiciously friendly and confidential. The ambassador had been misled. Arran, seeking Mary for his own son, was hostile to the English alliance, whereas she and the Cardinal were blameless.

It was the twenty-second of March 1543. "And," quoth she, "the Governor said that the child was not like to live; but you shall see," quoth she, "whether he saith true or not"; and therewith she caused me to go with her to the chamber where the child was, and showed her unto me, and also caused the nurse to unwrap her out of the clothes, that I might see her naked. I assure your Majesty it is as goodly a child as I have seen of her age, and as like to live, with the grace of God." He saw her again on the tenth of August. "The Queen told me that her daughter did grow apace; and soon," she said, "she would be a woman if she took

after her mother; who indeed is of the largest stature of woman. And therewith she caused also the child to be brought to me, to the intent I might see her, assuring your Majesty that she is a right fair and goodly child, as any that I have seen for her age. And then after a little time passed in the beholding of the child"—they finally parted.

The volumes of facsimiles, reproduced, by an admirable method, from the most remarkable of our historical manuscripts, are among the most splendid ever printed in this country. Hidden away in the libraries of wealthy book-hunters, they have become rare and costly already; by-and-by they will be worth their weight in silver, if not in gold. This is the reason, it may be, why they are so seldom read, so little used. It is a pity; for they bring us into vital relations, into curiously close contact, with the kings and queens and scholars and statesmen who wrote them. If a copy could be placed in each of our public schools, and the teacher were able to say, *Here is a letter from Elizabeth; here is a State paper by Cecil; this was written by John Knox, that by Argyll*, history would be vitalised. Among the Scottish facsimiles, some of the letters despatched from France when the Queen of Scots was still a girl are full of interest. This

schoolgirl scrawl, for instance (the characters are large and round, yet not unlike those with which we are familiar from her later letters), comes from Mary herself. It was addressed to the Dowager-Queen on the occasion of her first communion :—

“MADAM,—I am very glad to have the means of writing to you my news, being in very great pain from being so long without hearing any of yours. Madam, I have heard that the Governor has put himself at your will, and has restored into your hands the principal places of the kingdom, of which I am very glad, and every day praise our Lord for it; and also that all the princes and great lords have returned unto you. I have come to Meudon to Madam, my grandmother, in order to keep the feast of Easter, because she and my uncle—Monsieur the Cardinal—wish that I should take the sacrament. I pray to God very humbly to give me grace, that I may make a good beginning. I must not forget to tell you that this bearer has done good and acceptable service to the king.

“Here, Madam, I will present to you my humble recommendations to your good favour, beseeching the Creator to give you in continued health a very happy life.—Your very humble and very obedient daughter, MARIE.”

—“Dieu, auquel je supplie tres humblement me donner la grace d’i bien commander.” These words were written about 1554, when Darnley and Bothwell, and the Kirk o’ Field and the scaffold at Fotheringay, were yet in the far distance. One is tempted to say, knowing what we know now, that sadder words—words more pregnant with the keenest irony of contrast—were never written. A good beginning! God help her! Had she no vision of the end? ¹ From other letters belonging to the same period (printed in these volumes), we gather that the Queen of Hearts had already begun her career of conquest. Thus, when she is seven years old, her half-brother—Francis of Orleans—writes to their mother: “I must not forget to tell you that the little Queen of Scotland is found by every one so engaging that the king is more than content.” “The Queen your daughter,” Margaret of France, afterwards Duchess of Savoy, remarks, “the Queen your daughter improves so much in every way that I cannot write enough about her; her honesty and goodness become every day more marked.” Anne d’Est, the Princess of Ferrara, is even more enthusiastic: “You have the best and prettiest little Queen

¹ The contrast, too, between the words in this early letter and the words on her cloth of State,—“En ma fin est mon commencement,”—is sufficiently striking.

in the world; her talk and carriage are so discreet that we no longer think of or treat her as a child." And a year or two later, on the eve of her marriage to the Dauphin, Diane de Poitiers confirms the impression of Mary's early tact and reasonableness. "She spoke to the Scottish deputies not as an inexperienced child, but as a woman of age and knowledge: they will tell you this when they return."

Randolph was the English resident at the Scottish Court during nearly the whole of Mary's reign. Patient, diligent, assiduous, sagacious, his letters are crowded with realistic touches which have high merit, and display an unsuspected mimetic faculty. He seems to have used the pen to clear, so to speak, his mental vision; he speculates—revolving the *pros* and *cons*—while he writes; the entire scope of an obscure passage of intrigue will flash upon him, grow luminous, just as he closes his letter. He lives in his work, and the personages in whose fortunes he is absorbed, pass to and fro on his pages with extraordinary vitality, sincerity, and sprightliness. Not that it ever occurs to him that he is an artist; it is all in the way of business only; yet had Cecil employed a Shakespeare he could hardly have secured a more living picture of the Court and capital of Scot-

land. Both Mary and Lethington had a singular interest for him; the more he saw of Maitland, the more he was impressed by his fine intelligence, his profound capacity and persuasive force; and the Queen, whom he had been taught to distrust, fairly disarmed him. Her frank address, her hardy simplicity, her sportive badinage and gay banter, may have cloaked, as we are now led to understand they did, the subtlest state-craft; but *that* was not the impression they made upon this wary and watchful observer at the time; and the explanation seems somewhat strained.

Randolph went with her on that progress to Inverness which ended in the rout of Corrichie,—“a terrible journey both for horse and man, the countries are so poor and the victuals so scarce.” There were apprehensions, too, about the temper of the Gordons,—the slightest misadventure might have brought about an explosion. But during all that anxious time, Mary was as cool as the oldest soldier in her train. “I never saw the Queen moved—never dismayed; nor never thought I that stomach to be in her that I find. She repented nothing, but when the Lords and others at Inverness came in the morning from the watch, that she was not a man, to know what life it was to lie all night in the fields, or to walk upon the

causeway with a jack and knapsack—a Glasgow buckler and a broadsword.”¹ It was her habit to sit in the Council Chamber at Holyrood “sewing some work or other” (surely a pretty feminine trait) while the Lords deliberated, so that if necessary she could take part in the discussion; and no duty of state was neglected by her; but when she unbent she unbent wholly. Randolph tried on one occasion, when she was enjoying a brief holiday at St Andrews, to introduce some graver matter; but Mary would not listen. “I see now well,” she exclaimed in that tone of banter which suited her so well, “that you are weary of this company and treatment. I sent for you to be merry, and to see how like a bourgeois wife I live with my

¹ Randolph's words recall Knox's account of the high intrepid spirit displayed by Mary when she swooped down upon the rebel Lords during the Run-about-Raid. “Soon after their return to Glasgow, the King and Queen were certainly advertised that the Lords were passed to Edinburgh; and therefore caused immediately to warn the whole army to pass with them to Edinburgh the next day, who, early in the morning, long before the sun was risen, began to march. But there

arose such a vehement tempest of wind and rain from the east, as the like had not been seen before in a long time; so that a little brook turned incontinent into a great river, and the raging storm being in their face, with great difficulty went they forward: And albeit the most part waxed weary, yet the Queen's courage increased man-like so much that she was ever with the foremost. There were divers persons drowned that day in the water of Carron.”—II. 500.

little troop, and you will interrupt our pastime with your great and grave matters. I pray you, sir, if you be weary here return home to Edinburgh, and keep your gravity and great embassy until the Queen come thither, for, I assure you, you shall not get her here, nor I know not myself where she is gone. You see neither cloth of estate, nor such appearance, that you may think there is a Queen here, nor I would not that you should think that I am she at St Andrews that I was at Edinburgh. Go where you will," she added, "very merry," "I care no more for you."

Sir Francis Knollys, on finding how troublesome she could make herself, came to dislike Mary; but when she first flashed upon him in her dishevelled beauty and stormy anger—travel-stained though she was by her long ride after the Langside panic—the puritanic veteran warmed into unpremeditated welcome. When we read the remarkable letters in which he describes the fugitive Queen, we cease to wonder at the disquietude of Elizabeth; a glance, a smile, a few cordial words, from such a woman might have set all the northern counties in a blaze. The cold and canny Scot, whose metaphysical and theological ardour contrast so curiously with his frugal common-sense, could stolidly resist

the charm ; but the Catholic nobles, the Border chivalry, would have responded without a day's delay to her summons.

"We found her," Sir Francis wrote to Elizabeth, "in her chamber of presence ready to receive us, when we declared unto her your Highness's sorrowfulness for her lamentable misadventure. We found her in her answers to have an eloquent tongue and a discreet head ; and it seemeth by her doings she hath stout courage and liberal heart adjoining thereto." Ten days afterwards he continued to write in the same strain. "This lady and princess is a notable woman. She seemeth to regard no ceremonious honour besides the acknowledgment of her estate royal. She showeth a disposition to speak much, to be bold, to be pleasant, to be very familiar. She showeth a great desire to be revenged of her enemies. She shows a readiness to expose herself to all perils in hope of victory. She desires much to hear of hardiness and valiancy, commending by name all approved hardy men of her country, although they be her enemies ; and she concealeth no cowardice even in her friends. The thing she most thirsteth after is victory ; and it seemeth to be indifferent to her to have her enemies diminished either by the sword of her friends, or by the liberal promises and rewards of her purse, or by division and

quarrels among themselves. So that for victory's sake, pain and peril seem pleasant unto her ; and in respect of victory, wealth and all things seem to her contemptuous and vile. Now what is to be done with such a lady and princess, and whether such a lady and princess be to be nourished in our bosom, or whether it be good to halt and dissemble with such a lady, I refer to your judgment. The plainest way is the most honourable in my opinion." Months pass away, and his ardour does not abate. "She does not dislike my plain dealing. Surely she is a rare woman ; for as no flattery can lightly abuse her, so no plain speech seemeth to offend her, if she think the speaker thereof to be an honest man."¹

When Cecil's friend, Mr White, was on his road to Ireland in the spring of 1569, he learned that Mary had been removed to Tutbury Castle, and that by making a slight detour he might be able to see the woman on whom, in pity or aversion, all eyes were then turned. White appears to have been a well-meaning but vulgar busybody ; with little feeling of delicacy or decency, and no sense of humour ; a dull, but not incurious or unobservant man—to whom posterity indeed is really indebted ; for he con-

¹ May 29, June 11, August 8, 1568.

trived to record his impressions of the captive Queen with such unconscious sincerity and directness, that no better picture of Mary in her English prison has been preserved.

On his arrival Mary came out of the presence-chamber and bade him welcome. After evening service she talked with him from six to seven, asking him to excuse her bad English. He told her, with questionable courtesy (only the whole letter was obviously meant for Elizabeth), that she ought to be very thankful for such princelike entertainment. "And for my own part did wish her Grace meekly to bow her head to God, who hath put her into this school, to learn to know Him to be above kings and princes of this world; with such other like speeches as time and occasion then served; which she very gently accepted, and confessed that she had indeed great cause to thank God for sparing of her, and great cause also to thank her good sister for this kindly using of her. As for contentation in this her present estate she would not require at God's hands, but only patience, which she humbly prayed Him to give her. I asked her Grace, since the weather did cut off all exercises abroad, how she passed the time within? She said that all day she wrought with her needle, and that the diversity of the colours made the work seem less tedious, and continued so long at it till very

pain made her to give over ; and with that laid her hand on her left side, and complained of an old grief newly increased there. Upon this occasion she entered into a pretty disputable comparison between carving, painting, and working with the needle, affirming painting in her opinion for the most commendable quality. I answered her Grace I could skill of neither of them, but that I had read ‘*Pictura*’ to be *veritas falsa*. With this she closed up her talk, and, bidding me farewell, retired into her privy chamber.”

So the interview closed. Mary had obviously had enough of his pedantic moralities ; and he proceeds to record the impression which he had received. “ But if I (who in the sight of God bear the Queen’s majesty a natural love beside my bounded duty) might give advice, there should very few subjects in this land have access to, or conference with, this lady. For beside that she is a goodly personage (and yet in truth not comparable to our Sovereign), she hath withal an alluring grace, a pretty Scottish speech, and a searching wit clouded with mildness. Her hair of itself is black ; and yet Mr Knollys told me that she wears hair of sundry colours.” Then he adds : “ In looking upon her cloth of estate, I noted this sentence embroidered, *En ma fin est mon commencement*—which

is a riddle I understand not. My Lord of Shrewsbury is very careful of his charge; but the Queen outwatches them all, for it is one of the clock at least every night ere she go to bed. The next morning I was up timely, and viewing the seat of the house, which in my opinion stands much like Windsor, I espied two halberd-men without the castle wall searching underneath the Queen's bed-chamber window. And so—waiting an easterly wind—I humbly take my leave.”¹

The scene at Jedburgh in 1566, when for several days Mary was in extreme danger, appears to have softened for the moment the bitterest animosities. Even *in articulo mortis*, as it seemed, the Queen was composed, courageous, magnanimous. Twenty years afterwards the end came,—the scaffold, the block, the sword of the executioner, the shame of a public death. So environed, the stoutest heart might have failed; but Mary did not falter. “She herself endured it (as we must all truly say that were eyewitnesses) with great courage and show of magnanimity.” Thus Mr Marmaduke Darell on “this present Thursday” (February 8, 1587—the day of her execution) wrote to Mr William

¹ 26th Feb. 1569.

Darell from "this Castle of Fotheringay." It was simply pretence and artifice, we are now asked to believe; the great actress had reached the crowning scene of the play, and her acting was no doubt consummate. But the sick-bed at Jedburgh was quite honest—even Knox admits as much. She was dying in an obscure Border hamlet—a scanty company, a mean stage—yet she bore herself with the same instinctive and considerate magnanimity. Understanding that death was near, she gathered the Lords about her, and committed her son and her country to their charge. "I seek not lang life in this world," she is reported to have said, by one who was present; and then she added, "Ye know also, my Lords, the favour that I have borne unto you since my arriving in this realm, and that I have pressed none of you that profess the religion to a worship that your conscience does not approve. I pray you also on your part not to press them that makes profession of the auld Catholic faith; and if indeed you knew what it is to a person in such extremity as I am, you would never press them. I pray you, brother," she continued, turning to the Earl of Moray, "that ye trouble nane."¹ This was the legacy

¹ Queen Mary at Jedburgh in 1566. By John Small, F.S.A. Scot. Edinburgh · 1881.

of peace and goodwill, of tolerance and charity, that the dying Queen was leaving behind her. Knox, in his account of the incident, uses very nearly the same words: "Within a few days after she took sickness in a most extreme manner, for she lay two hours long coal dead, as it were, without breath or any sign of life; at length she revived, and speaking very softly she desired the Lords to pray for her to God. She said the Creed in English, and desired my Lord of Moray, if she should chance to depart, that he would not be over-extreme to such as were of her religion."

Out of these casual notices, written mostly on the spur of the moment, and not intended for publication, some more or less lively idea of Mary, in her habit as she lived, may be gathered. I am not prepared to say that they are unambiguous, or capable of being construed in one sense only. But it rather appears to me that they are not consistent with that view of her character which has been lately presented to us by a master of English prose, and which, as a masterpiece of graphic art, has stamped itself upon the popular imagination of our time. Some of us may have seen on the walls of an old Scottish mansion-house, not unknown to fame, the picture of a girl in her first youth, attired in a demure

conventual habit. The heavy sombre dress emphasises the gay and delicate beauty of the face, the peach-like bloom on the white cheek, the covert smile that lurks between the tinted lips. This, they say, is a portrait of the Queen; but in the old houses of the Scottish gentry nearly every pretty face, to which no ancestral memories attach, purports to be a "Mary Stuart."¹ Then there are portraits of her in more than one European gallery, in which it is difficult to detect any trace of the ingenuous girlish charm; a woman of a far different type, whose thin lips, whose watchful eyes, are cruel and inscrutable as Medea's.² This, or such as this, is the Mary that Mr Froude sets before us. Her intellectual coolness masks tropical passion; her honeyed words hide deadly poison. Sharp as steel, hard as adamant, touched by no pity, hurt by no remorse, with unflinching determination, with absolute masterfulness, the murderer of Darnley, the boon-companion of Bothwell, passes on to her evil end. Somewhere between the two — somewhere between the innocent and guileless girl and the

¹ My impression is that the little sketch to which I refer was to be seen thirty or forty years ago at Fyvie Castle. The description, at least, is taken from a note made about that

time.

² The unpleasant "Sheffield portrait," preserved at Hardwick Hall, is skilfully reproduced in Leader's 'Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity.'

hard and treacherous woman,—the true Mary Stuart may perhaps be found.

It is not my purpose in the meantime to take any part in the partisan controversy of which “the daughter of debate” has been the exciting cause. It appears to me, however (this much may here be said), that only through a profound misconception is it possible to discover conspicuous political capacity in Mary Stuart. No words of praise can be too high for many of her gifts. But these gifts were not specifically intellectual. The consummate statecraft with which she is credited was not appreciated by her contemporaries; the Machiavellian astuteness, the almost preternatural keenness of sight, readiness of resource, tenacity of purpose, and singleness of aim, are comparatively recent discoveries. The woman that her contemporaries knew was not one who, in Shakespearian phrase, “bears all down with her *brain*.” Knox indeed professed to find in her a craft beyond her years; but Knox’s judgments of womenkind (as I have had occasion to show), were of little value. Had the Queen been a Calvinist, he would have seen in her “craft” true wisdom, and in her “hatred of the word” pure religion. Mary Stuart had many of the brilliant qualities of her race; but she had also their fatal defects. She lacked the coolness, the self-control, the patience that becomes the

diplomatist. Her quick resentment was often as imprudent as her prompt forgiveness. Her impulsive anger sometimes undid in a day the politic labour of months. Her keen contempt for the pharisaic bearing and spiritual arrogance of the "Congregation of Jesus Christ" found vent sooner or later in rash and scornful words that worked her bitter harm. She really desired to stand well with the English Queen; but her cousin's mean duplicity and blundering craft exhausted her patience; and a biting jest or a scornful laugh did more to exasperate Elizabeth than the Darnley murder or the Bothwell marriage. Neither her letters nor her poems are above mediocrity. The style is sufficiently graceful, but the sentiments are faded and commonplace. Her State papers, indeed, are remarkably able; but then they were written by Lethington; and from the first Mary was clever enough to recognise Maitland's consummate ability, and real devotion to her service. On the purely intellectual side, therefore, it appears to me that Mary was mediocre, if not weak; but, as I have said, most of her other gifts were beyond praise. She was the most beautiful woman of her age, and the most beautiful woman of her age must have found in her beauty alone a force of attraction and command. Her social charm was unrivalled,—Knox even, and

Randolph and Throckmorton, could not quite resist "the enchantment whereby men are bewitched." Something more, however, than social charm or physical beauty was needed to make her what she was,—one of the half-dozen women of the world who are not forgotten, nor like to be forgotten. And "the strain of rareness" (to borrow another phrase from Shakespeare) which we fail to find in her intellect, we find in her character. Her personal force was boundless; wherever we come directly in contact with her, we are in contact with a rich and vivid "humanity." The words that have been used to describe another remarkable woman are even more closely applicable to Mary. "Throughout, as with Rosalind, her royal descent is patent; like Orlando's mistress, she betrays her origin in a hundred gallant and inspiring qualities—the quickness and brilliance of her blood, her exquisite and abounding spirit, her delicate vigour of temperament, her swiftness of perception, her generous intensity of emotion." These are gifts of the soul, emotional, not intellectual, or at least only remotely intellectual; and out of them, when finely mixed, is wrought the "strong toil of grace," the incommunicable feminine charm, the *je ne sais quoi* on which the Frenchman retreats when the subtle something eludes his analysis, of which the little Queen had early

found the key. It may be that in Mary's nature the bitter and the sweet were perversely mixed. It may be that she was a cruel and crafty coquette, who played with men's hearts and lives as a cat plays with its mouse. On the evidence beside us, however, it is difficult to hold this view. So far as I can judge, the caressing sweetness, the gracious and persuasive tact, the broad human interest, the polished urbanity, the flattering appreciation, the gaiety and the pensiveness, were not borrowed, were not feigned. Nature had generously dowered her. Mary Stuart was one of the rare women who, in whatever station she is born, rules her world—the great world or the village green—as if the talisman by which hearts are won had been given her by a Fairy Godmother.

Whether Mary had any very keen sense of right and wrong is another question on which I do not enter here. Morality is a very wide word; it embraces pity, tenderness, fidelity, unselfishness, as well as honesty, purity, temperance, truthfulness, self-restraint. Whether Mary's moral code included the severer virtues, we shall see before the end comes; but that she was loyal to her convictions (such as they were) and faithful to her friends, an indulgent mistress, a generous though even-handed ruler, will, I think, be generally admitted. Whether she was

more, or whether the cruel injustice, the bitter persecution (as she regarded it) which clouded her life, hurt the finer nature which God had given her, the sequel will show. Only this need be added,—That for such a woman—a woman to whom the sense of freedom was as the breath of her nostrils—no more frightfully inhuman punishment could have been devised than eighteen years' imprisonment. We need not wonder that Elizabeth's crowning blunder—the scaffold at Fotheringay—should have been accepted with more than stoical calm.

“A frightfully inhuman punishment;” and in this we find the conclusive answer to the plea that the imprisoned Mary, in conspiring against Elizabeth, was guilty of what Spenser calls “sedition.” If Mary during her captivity plotted against her jailer, who can blame her? Elizabeth, with her eyes open, chose to run the risk, and she should have been ready to accept the consequences. To take Mary's life because she was a danger to the throne may have been prudent and politic; but to put her to death, because by every possible means she strove to regain her freedom, admits of no defence. To assume that a woman like Mary would willingly consent to wear her chains was simple infatuation. Elizabeth's astonishment at her guest's ingratitude

was childish petulance or ridiculous pretence ; she knew, or ought to have known, when she elected to become her keeper, that it was thenceforth war to the death ; and that in such a contest, no weapon of offence or defence would be left untried.

CHAPTER EIGHT.

THE MINISTER OF MARY STUART.

LETHINGTON'S position on the death of Francis became one of extreme difficulty. It was probable that his alliance with the Congregation would be resented by the daughter as it had been resented by the mother.¹ He had deserted the Dowager-Queen; he had organised the rebel government; he had plotted with Elizabeth and Cecil. Could he become the minister, the confidential minister, of Mary Stuart? All these embarrassing questions are emphasised, are looked at from every possible point of view, in the letters that he wrote during the interval between the death of the French king and the return of Mary.

¹ That the Queen-Dowager should have resented Maitland's defection with peculiar bitterness, was quite natural. "Ross, the Scottish herald, reported that the Dowager was very lenient, and would receive the Lords into favour, if they put away young Lethington and others by whom they had been misled." — Sadler, 15th November 1559.

The question was settled for him by the Queen. She had felt from a very early period that there was a substantial agreement between herself and Maitland. "I understand the Queen of Scotland hath hitherto no great devotion to Maitland, Grange, and Balnaves; whereof I am nothing sorry,"—Throckmorton wrote from Paris in spring; but Throckmorton was wrong. Even then Mary had made up her mind to win Maitland.¹ She had seen him abroad—probably on more than one occasion; at the time, no doubt, little more than a lad, but gallant, sanguine, ardent, intrepid. This was a man fit for all adventures; and in Lethington from the very first she appears to have discovered a kindred spirit. She was a Catholic, he was a Calvinist; he a simple gentleman, she the heir-ess of an ancient monarchy and a long line of kings; the contrasts could be multiplied indefinitely; yet a true identity drew them together. Whatever their station, whatever their creed, they were in character and temperament children of the renaissance. Between Knox and Maitland there could be no real union, whereas the ties that bound Maitland to Mary were of the closest kind. I am not blaming

¹ Throckmorton adds in the same letter, "But she mindeth | can to win them to her, which she trusteth well to compass" (May 1, 1561):
to use all the best means she

either Knox or Maitland; it is not a matter for praise or blame; it is simply a matter of fact. Knox was as ruthless as a prophet of Israel, as narrow as a Spanish Inquisitor; whereas Maitland and Mary belonged to the new world. In their lack of moral fervour and ascetic intensity, in their contempt for convention and conventional standards, in their freedom from obsolete prepossessions, in their directness, their frankness, their urbanity, they represent the modern spirit.

It has been asserted, indeed, that Mary returned to Scotland with a purpose "fixed as the stars" to undo the Reformation. She was a missionary of the Catholic Church, prepared, at whatever cost, to bring back the flock which had strayed into forbidden pastures, to the Roman shepherd and the Apostolic fold. Her conversations with the English minister at Paris, prior to her departure for the North, which have been recorded with obvious fidelity, do not certainly strengthen this view. It appears to me to be clear that before these interviews took place, Mary had resolved to follow the moderate counsels with which Maitland's name was already identified,—steering a middle course between the bitterness of Knox and the bitterness of Huntly. "Well," quoth she, "I will be plain with you. The religion which I profess, I take

to be most acceptable to God, and indeed neither do I know, or desire to know, any other. Constancy becometh all folks well, but none better than Princes and such as have rule over realms, and specially in matters of religion. For my part, you may perceive that I am none of these that will change their religion every year; and as I told you in the beginning, I mean to constrain none of my subjects, but should wish that they are all as I am, and I trust they shall have no support to constrain me." Such a plea for liberty of conscience must have been as displeasing to the one faction as to the other—to the fanatical Catholic as to the fanatical Calvinist. It is urged, of course, that these declarations were insincere and intended to deceive; words only, not deeds. But the fact remains that, both before and after her return, Mary refused to ally herself with the extreme factions, and steadily resisted the pressure that was brought to bear upon her from the rival camps. She exerted her influence to procure a measure of toleration for those who adhered to the ancient Church; and Knox complains bitterly that her plea for the liberty of the conscience was urged with some measure of success. "And in very deed so it came to pass; for the Queen's flattering words, ever still crying, 'Conscience, conscience; it is a sore thing to constrain the conscience,'

blinded all men." On the other hand, she declined repeatedly and emphatically to ally herself with the enemies of the Reformation. All Scotland north of Dunkeld was at Huntly's bidding; everywhere the Catholic Lords were ready to join him; and if Mary had accepted the invitation which was conveyed to her by Leslie—to land at Aberdeen, and put herself at the head of the Conservative reaction—it is possible that she might have swept the "Professors" across the Border. My own opinion is, that without the aid of Elizabeth (and Elizabeth would hardly have cared to interpose at the moment,—the French being now fairly out of the country,¹ and her previous venture having been attended, as she thought, with such indifferent success), there was no force at the disposal of the Congregation which could have stayed her advance for a week. But she would not listen to Leslie. She would have no more war. She would accept the established order,—not unreservedly indeed, but in so far as it was consistent with a prudent, moderate, and conciliatory policy, "with quietness, peace, and civil society."² The hearts of the people were to be

¹ Small garrisons, indeed, still remained at Dunbar and Inchekeith—it was characteristic of Mary that directly on her ar-

rival she sent them back to France.

² Proclamation of 25th August.

won; and she had determined to win them. "The Scottish Queen passed by sea into Scotland the 19th of this month. She hath no soldiers nor train, and but a small household. *She meuneth to commit herself to the trust of her own.*"¹ This was the information which Cecil had received, and it was substantially correct. Mary knew, however, that such an experiment could not succeed if the leader of the moderate party was hostile; hence the importance which she attached to Maitland's adhesion. Her friendly advances were crowned with success. Her frankness disarmed him; his doubts and scruples were removed; and from the day of her return till the day of his death, he remained her trustiest, her most devoted, and her most serviceable minister.

There is the ring of genuine feeling, of a high and magnanimous nature, in the letter which she addressed to him on the eve of her return. She would gladly employ him in her service, for she had no doubt of his goodwill. She understood the scruples which he felt; he had been the diplomatic chief of the disaffected Lords; he had been in correspondence with England and with Elizabeth. But she had for-

¹ Cecil to Sussex, 21st Aug. 1561. He adds, referring to Elizabeth, "I saw small dis- position here to be at any new charge, for that there appeared so hard fruit of the former."

given all past offences, and for the future she would entirely trust him. She had always appreciated his wisdom and sagacity, and she was now confident of his affection and fidelity. Hereafter they would deal openly with each other. He was not to fear what gossips and tale-bearers might say; such creatures had no credit with her,—she did not listen to calumny: she judged her ministers by their actions, and by their zeal and faithfulness in her service.¹

It was not, however, until Mary's personal fascination was brought to bear, that Lethington's doubts and scruples were entirely removed. The policy of her return continued to be eagerly canvassed with the English envoy; and Randolph's narrative would rather incline us to believe that up to the last moment Maitland was desirous that she should be detained abroad. "I have shown your Honour's letters," he wrote to Cecil, "unto the Lord James, Lord Morton, Lord Lethington: they wish, as your Honour doth, that she might be stayed yet for a space; and if it were not for their obedience sake, some of them care not though they never saw her face."² This is scarcely a fair representation of Maitland's view, which upon the whole was that of

¹ 29th June 1561, from Paris (French).

² 9th August 1561.

a patriot and a statesman. The existing "regiment" was avowedly provisional, and experience did not lead to any confident belief in its stability. It lacked all the elements of a strong government; antiquity, common consent, a clear and definite policy. What continuity it had it owed to Lethington himself,—the whole burden of administration having devolved upon him. This was a condition of things which he justly regarded with apprehension; and after Mary had been released by the death of Francis from her French connection, he saw only one tolerable issue,—the return of the Queen of Scots to Holyrood on certain specified conditions. Of these the most important was the institution of cordial relations between the two Queens,—so closely allied, and hitherto so bitterly divided. If Mary could be induced to prefer the friendship of England to the friendship of France, all might yet be well; and he believed that, with delicate handling and judicious concession, such a union could be effected. "Otherwise I fear it shall be hard to do."¹ These were the suggestions which he had sent to Cecil early in the year; but Elizabeth's obstinate insistence upon an untenable claim made it "hard to do." The obstinacy of Elizabeth is not intelligible.

¹ 26th February 1561.

It was, as Lethington clearly saw, of the first importance that Mary should be coaxed into friendliness; yet the English ministers made themselves and their mistress as unpleasant to her as they well could. They might be sure that Mary would never renounce her right to the English succession; and even if they had bullied her into ratifying the article which contained the renunciation, what real advantage would they have gained? A renunciation into which she had been coerced, any renunciation, in fact, obtained by fair means or foul, would not, when the crisis arrived, have been worth the paper on which it was written. Cecil, Bedford, Throckmorton, were offensively peremptory;¹ but Mary's steady resistance could not be overcome. She was as deftly courteous as Lethington himself could have been; but neither threat nor entreaty moved her an inch. The decision must be delayed till she returned to Scotland; then she would take the advice of

¹ Although they were aware that Mary's construction of the treaty as prejudicial to her rights to the English succession was sound. This is tacitly admitted by Cecil in his letter of 14th July to Throckmorton, when the possibility of an accord on the footing of admitting Mary's interest "in default

of heirs of Elizabeth's body" is mooted as "a matter secretly thought of." See also Moray's letter of 6th August to Elizabeth, in which he says that Mary will no doubt "think it hard, being so nigh of the blood of England, so to be made a stranger to it."

her Council; nothing could be done till then. This was not a very promising beginning; but Elizabeth, yielding to her imprudent and childish resentment, continued to put herself still further in the wrong. She refused to grant a safe-conduct to Mary, and she led the whole world to believe, rightly or wrongly, that, but for the accident of a fog, the Scottish Queen would have been the tenant of an English prison. Mary was quick to profit by the blundering diplomacy of England. "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur," she said to Throckmorton, "it will be thought very strange among all princes and countries that the Queen your mistress should first animate my subjects against me, and now, being a widow, impeach my going into my own country. If," she added afterwards, "my preparations were not so far advanced, peradventure your mistress's unkindness might stay my voyage; but now I am determined to adventure the matter, whatever come of it. I trust the wind will be so favourable that I need not come to the coast of England; but if I do, your mistress will have me in her hand, and if she be so hard-hearted as to desire my end, she may then do her pleasure. Peradventure that might be better for me than to live. In this matter," quoth she, "God's will be done."¹

¹ 26th July 1561 (from Paris).

It is plain that Maitland was profoundly chagrined by Cecil's clumsy tactics. Instead of delicate handling and judicious concession, there had been either unpardonable blundering, or deliberate design to make a friendly accord between the Queens impossible. His own safety was compromised. "I pray you consider what danger it is for me to write. Many men's eyes look upon me; my familiarity with your realm is known, and so far disliked that, unless our Queen be made favourable to England, it shall be my undoing."¹ For him personally this was bad enough; but a far more serious danger was to be apprehended. The peace of the realms had been compromised. His letter of August tenth is in this connection extremely instructive. It is necessary, indeed, to read between the lines; for it is in substance, though not in form, a strong remonstrance against the policy of exasperation on which Elizabeth was bent. "I do also allow your opinion anent the Queen's journey to Scotland; whose coming hither, if she be enemy to the religion, and so affected towards your realm as she yet appeareth, shall not fail to raise wonderful tragedies." Though there were many waverers, "yet I doubt not but the best sort will constantly and stoutly bear out

¹ 26th February 1561.

that which they have begun." His own peril was great, yet if it might be compassed that the two Queens should be as dear friends as they are tender cousins, then would he have as good part in her good grace as any of his quality in Scotland. "If this cannot be brought to pass, then I see well it will be hard for me to dwell in Rome and strive with the Pope." On the whole, the Queen's return, though not without many and evident dangers, was to be desired; "for what is not to be feared in a realm lacking lawful government? It is now more than two years past that we have lived in a manner without any regiment; which, when I consider sometimes with myself, I marvel from whence doth proceed the quietness which we presently enjoy, the like whereof, I think, all the circumstances being weighed, has not been seen in any realm." There was no danger of a breach in the continuance of the amity betwixt the realms so long as Mary was absent; "and if all men were so persuaded as I am, and did consider the consequences which I foresee, little peril would be after her coming: but her presence may alter many things." In the brief note which he had addressed to Cecil on the previous day, and which had obviously been penned hurriedly on his return from the North, he had urged indirectly the same considerations. "There is nothing for

us so dangerous as temporising. Our countrymen's wits be best upon the sudden, and if matters be trained in length, then lack of charges killeth us. I can never change my opinion that the good intelligence between the realms can never be put in security unless by some means the Queen my Sovereign may be persuaded to enter into it."¹ The moods which these letters disclose are, it must be confessed, somewhat mixed; but the same cannot be said of that which followed. In the interval Mary's messenger, Captain Anstruther, had arrived at Edinburgh, bringing the alarming intelligence that Elizabeth had practically declared war against her cousin, and that an English fleet, intended to intercept her, was cruising off the Northumbrian coast. Lethington's habitual courtesy to Cecil was sorely tried; the gross and indeed grotesque impolicy of the proceeding almost took away his breath. His worst anticipations were to be verified; the home-coming would now, without fail, raise "wonderful tragedies." What was to be done? He wrote to Cecil the morning after Anstruther had landed: "If two galleys may quietly pass, I wish the passport had been liberally granted. To what purpose should you open your pack

¹ 9th August 1561.

and sell none of your wares, or declare you enemies to those whom you cannot punish? It passeth my dull capacity to conceive what this sudden enterprise should mean. My wit is not sufficient to give advice in so dangerous a cast—God maintain his cause and those that mean uprightly. I pray you send me your advice what is best to be done, as well in the common cause as in my particular, who am held to be the chief meddler and principal negotiator of all the practices with your realm: though I be not in greatest place, yet is not my danger least—especially when she shall come home, *having so lately received at your Queen's hands so great a discourtesy—as she will think.*"¹ Maitland was right; the action of the English Government had been perverse beyond belief; they had done precisely what he had all along warned them against doing. The *brutum fulmen* was as impolitic as it was stupid. "If two galleys may quietly pass, I wish the passport had been liberally granted." Four days afterwards Mary landed at Leith; and—as Maitland had anticipated—"her presence altered many things."

The Minister of Mary Stuart was now in his thirty-third year—a man comparatively youthful, yet with a most varied experience; and

¹ 15th August 1561.

some more complete estimate of his personal qualities, of his striking individuality, than I have yet been able to give, may here be attempted. When this is done, the narrative of the eventful years that were to follow need not be again interrupted. Lethington had a good deal of the magnetic force of his mistress; he was a man eminently fitted to win and attract; yet while he was warmly loved by those whom he loved, he inspired those who disliked and distrusted him with an even keener aversion. When trying to arrive at some tolerably just conclusions about this remarkable man, we must look on both sides of the picture,—must weigh the invective of Knox and Buchanan, as well as the friendly testimony of Mary and Elizabeth, of Cecil and Kirkaldy. All of them, indeed, at one time or other, had expressed their admiration of his political sagacity and administrative genius; but the position was so perplexing, and the governing forces so complex and intricate, that the parts of the actors were being constantly recast. Out of the same fountain came sweet water and bitter. The friend of to-day was the foe to-morrow. We must remember, besides, that Maitland allied himself with a cause that failed. Even in her own age there were men who felt that a smile from Mary on her scaffold was worth any star or ribbon that

the prosperous Elizabeth could bestow; but these were the Quixotes at whom the world laughs. The beaten men are always at a disadvantage; the faction that wins commands the machinery by which fame is dispensed, and honour awarded, and truth suppressed; and the politician who does not put his foot on his rival when he is down is false to the traditions of his craft.

Lethington, besides, belongs to a class of men who are not favourites with the multitude. Simplicity of motive and action is demanded of the popular hero. The subtleties of the moral life, the baffling entanglements of the obscurer passions, are as little appreciated by children and savages as the delicate gradations of colour. Maitland, it need not be concealed, is one of the difficulties of the historian. His record is not clear. We are in the Debatable Land. The temptation in such cases rather to cut than to untie the ravelled knot is often irresistible. Kirkaldy was a soldier whose transparent sincerity of temper and heroic singleness of aim could not be honestly misconstrued by the unfriendliest critic; whereas the pliant diplomacy of Lethington (the bewildering tactics of a daring general) has been not uncommonly, even by his friends, confounded with cynical dishonesty or juggling craft. "What profit," Buchanan asks with effective if bitter rhetoric, "what

profit shall the Queen gather of him that has been (as she knows) so oftentime traitor to her mother, to herself, to her son, to her brother, and to her country?"

The charge of inconsistency is a charge which a statesman is frequently, if not invariably, entitled to disregard. The ship which beats up channel against the wind, now on the one tack, now on the other, cannot be accused of vacillation; though it alters its course, it has still the same goal in view, and is constantly nearing the port for which it is bound. On the other hand, the man who insists on knocking his head against the stone wall which he cannot cross is stupid, if not criminal. The perfidies of a selfish time-server are of course inexcusable; but a statesman of the first rank must be judged less by his actions than by his aims. Maitland's reply to the accusation of inconsistency would probably have been that, though he had been allied with many factions, "the mark he constantly shot at" had never varied; and on the answer to the question, What was the mark he shot at?—what were his aims?—our estimate of the honesty or dishonesty of his political career will ultimately come to depend. We know, in point of fact, what Lethington *did* say. In the correspondence with Sussex, the pleas which he urged were discussed in a curiously academic spirit; but (assuming

that the facts were correctly stated) their validity could not be disputed; and they amounted to a distinct declaration that, in spite of inevitable oscillations of opinion, he had preserved from first to last an essential consistency.

For more than a hundred years the coarse daub which George Buchanan entitled 'Chamæleon' was held to be a fair, if not a flattering, portrait. The chamæleon, we are informed, can imitate all colours, save only the white and the red; "white, quilk is taken to be the symbol and token of simpleness and loyalty, and red signifying manliness and heroical courage." Such a creature, "subtle to draw out the secrets of every man's mind," had recently been engendered in Scotland, "in the county of Lothian, not far from Haddington,"—and so on, and so on, in the ponderous satirical fashion of the age. It was rumoured at the time that Lethington had been anxious to prevent the circulation of the pamphlet (he had sent a company of his men to arrest the printer, who barely managed to escape); but the rumour is ill-authenticated, and Maitland, who treated the persistent attacks of the preachers with contemptuous indifference, was not likely to trouble himself about a clumsy and anonymous libel.¹ As the tract was written

¹ In Bannatyne's Journal of 14th April 1571, it is said—

during 1570, when the tide of factious feeling was running high and strong, Buchanan's real estimate of Maitland's character is probably to be looked for elsewhere. In his History—that "story of Scotland" on which he was engaged at the time (purging it, as he told Cecil, of "English lies and Scottish vanity")—he praised the Secretary with unusual warmth. Maitland had rendered signal service to his country; he was "a young man of the most consummate ability, and of great learning." Richard Bannatyne's Journal, though more honest and less rhetorical, is even more intemperate than the 'Chamæleon.' Maitland is the "Mitchell Wylie"¹ of Scotland,—the most persuasive and insidious of political casuists. This sneering Mephistopheles, this evil spirit in human form, is potent for mischief. As clay in the hands of the potter, so are Huntly, and Chatelherault, and Grange, and Hume in the hands of "their great god, the Secretaire." "God confound his malitious and

"This night at evin, about eleven hours, Captain Melville came unto Robert Lepreviks's house and sought him (as he had done twice before), and looketh all the house for the 'Cameleone,' which the Secretaire fearit that he had prentit; but he, being warned before, escapet, and went out of his

house with sic things as he feared suld have hurt him gif they had been gottin." There were probably a good many of these "things,"—as all the broadsheets aganist the Queen and her party came from Lepreviks's press.

¹ Machiavelli.

politicke heade!" is the pious petition with which "gude godly Mr Richard" rounds off his reminiscences. In one sense, of course, no higher testimony to Maitland's abilities could be offered; it is clear that by the enemies of the Queen he was feared even more than he was hated.

It is from Buchanan's 'Chamæleon' and Banatyne's Journal that the "Lethington" of the later historians has been derived. While admitting that his talents as a statesman were of the highest order, they ask us to believe that his policy was "too artificial and technically subtle,"—as though he had been a speculative student whose principles of action had been evolved from his inner consciousness, and who had never come into close contact with his fellows,—a judgment which, as I shall have occasion to show, is very wide, indeed, of the mark. The extraordinary excellence of Principal Robertson's historical writings has not of late been sufficiently recognised; and the brief page that he devotes to Lethington is expressed with admirable lucidity. Yet even Robertson's estimate was coloured by the "Mitchell Wylie" tradition. "Maitland had early applied to public business admirable natural talents, improved by an acquaintance with the liberal arts; and at a time of life when his countrymen of the same age were following the

pleasures of the chase, or serving as adventurers in the armies of France, he was admitted into all the secrets of the Cabinet, and put upon a level with persons of the most consummate experience in the management of affairs. He possessed, in an eminent degree, that intrepid spirit which delights in pursuing bold designs, and was no less master of that political dexterity which is necessary for carrying them on with success. But these qualities were deeply tinctured with the neighbouring vices. His address sometimes degenerated into cunning; his acuteness bordered upon excess; his invention, over-fertile, suggested to him on some occasions chimerical schemes of policy too refined for the genius of his age and country; and his enterprising spirit engaged him in projects vast and splendid, but beyond his utmost power to execute." How far this estimate of his public career is sound and just, how far it rests upon a palpable and radical misconception, will appear in the course of the narrative. Meantime such personal traits as have been preserved may be brought together.

The two qualities of Maitland's intellect which most impressed his contemporaries were his extraordinary insight and his extraordinary persuasiveness. He was, according to Buchanan, "subtle to draw out the secrets of every man's mind." The gift of reading the thoughts of those

with whom he was brought into even casual contact, a faculty intuitive and instinctive, yet capable of being highly cultivated, and of course invaluable to the diplomatist, appears to have belonged to Lethington in a quite unusual degree. It is associated by Buchanan with the imitative capacity which the chamæleon possesses; and if by imitation we understand the intellectual sympathy which is the finest form of flattery, the explanation may probably be accepted. And of Lethington it could be said more truly than of almost any other man then living, that he "could wile the bird off the tree." Rude nobles, austere zealots, crafty diplomatists, were as wax in his hands; they could as little resist that "fell tongue" as the mariners of Ulysses could resist the songs of the Sirens. I have already spoken of his personal ascendancy over Elizabeth. "I wish you were here," Leslie wrote to him from London, when a very delicate negotiation was in progress; "you could well have handled the Queen of England after her humour, as you were wont to do." "I think there be some enchantment whereby men are bewitched," was written of Mary; but it might have been written of Mary's minister. Cecil's "brothers in Christ" came latterly to regard him with a sort of superstitious dread; there was something sinister and "uncanny"

about this potent wizard which turned his adversaries' weapons and weakened their guard. He made even the sturdy and unsusceptible Randolph uneasy; the English envoy looked forward, for instance, to the conference at Berwick, in which he was to be pitted against him, with almost ludicrous apprehension. "What is in the Laird of Lethington, your Majesty knoweth, for his wisdom to conceive, and his wit to convey, whatsoever his mind is bent unto to bring to pass. I doubt not but his will is to press us to the uttermost. To meet with such a match your Majesty knoweth what wit had been fit; how far he exceedeth the compass of one or two heads that can guide a queen and govern a whole realm alone!—your Majesty may well think how unfit I am for my part, and how far he is able to go beyond me. I would that it were not as I know it to be."¹

Lethington was not only a versatile and many-sided man; but we find in him, moreover, a combination of qualities that are rarely united. On the one side he is keen, supple, pliant, dexterous, adroit; on the other, strong, resolute, constant, fearless. Brilliant but erratic, was the

¹ Randolph to Elizabeth, 7th Nov. 1564. Randolph writes elsewhere: "Whenever Lethington is taken out of his place, they shall not find among themselves so fit a man to serve in this realm" (24th October 1561).

popular verdict; the fact being, as we shall see, that he adhered to his convictions with singular tenacity, and that the basis of his character was an eminent common-sense. He had indeed, as is obvious, the most profound confidence in his own powers: nor was his confidence without warrant; for he had measured himself against the most famous of his contemporaries, and he knew that he was as strong as the best of them. And he delighted in the delicate and difficult game he had to play—he was a tireless swimmer whose energies never flagged. Yet though he had the keenest enjoyment in the consciousness of intellectual supremacy, and an almost scornful reliance on the completeness of his own mental equipment, he was never rude, arrogant, or aggressive.¹ His self-restraint was perfect. Much of the charm of his manner, much of the attractiveness of his character, may be traced, no doubt, to the native urbanity which did not fail him even when disease and evil fortune had done their worst. He was perennially gay, deft,

¹ Throckmorton (21st July 1567) gives us a lively notion of Lethington's mode of parrying a difficult question "When I had perused this writing delivered me by the Lord of Leddington, I asked him how far these words, *Necessity of their*

cause in the end of the same, did extend, and how far they might be led? He made me none other answer, but, shaking his head, said, 'Vous estes ung renard' (*i.e.*, You are a very fox)"

incisive. And he had a light hand; he did his work with surprising ease—neatly, cleanly, promptly, adroitly—without effort and without strain. A simple gentleman by birth, he was for many years, like Disraeli, the trusted leader of the great nobles. Like Disraeli too, like many politicians similarly gifted, he has been accused of levity and unconscientiousness. If we are required to admit that, with a touch of what would now be called the Bohemian in his nature, he manifested scant respect for pious custom and decent convention (though even this much of positive accusation is barely warranted by any well-ascertained facts), it may fairly be answered that the frank cynicism of a Maitland or Disraeli does infinitely less harm to society than pharisaic cant or sentimental insincerity. The political leader who saps the morals of the people and debauches the public conscience is, in the words of the Poet-laureate, the “rogue in grain, veneered with sanctimonious theory,”—the sophist, the shuffler, and the trickster. There was a wide gulf indeed between Maitland and most of the men by whom he was surrounded. “The Lord James dealeth according to his nature, rudely, homely, and bluntly; the Laird of Lethington more delicately and finely;”¹ and the contrast

¹ Randolph to Cecil, 24th Oct. 1561.

between Maitland and Knox was still more marked. Nothing more futile and grotesque than Knox's application of the precedents of Old Testament history to the problems of modern life can well be imagined; and this Lethington was quick to perceive. Interminable disquisitions on Ahas, Urias, and the sons of Zeruiah were answered by a shrug of the shoulder or a curl of the lip. Page upon page of prolix argument and laborious trifling (even Calderwood admits that Knox was "prolix") were rendered of no avail by a keen epigram or a timely jest. The preachers inveighed against the "guydars of the Court"; but Maitland, though he could wear the cap and bells on occasion, was a political reasoner of the highest order; and an admirable common-sense gave strength and substance to the "mockage" that Knox so deeply resented. Nor can it be said with justice that he was politically more unscrupulous or "immoral" than the other statesmen of the age. That he made at least one fatal mistake, that on more than one occasion he miscalculated the strength of the forces with which he had to reckon, is not to be denied; yet his political sagacity was seldom at fault. If he had no high spiritual aims, and little patience with hysterical piety and intemperate zeal, he was at least entirely sane, and his unambitious gospel is the gospel of common-sense.

During several of the eventful years over which this history extends, Maitland was the spokesman of the Scottish people; and men of all parties were proud of his wit, his gaiety, his readiness, his epigrammatic force. He was a trenchant orator: and his rapidly written letters, of which many have been preserved, are fresh and animated. They have a literary flavour which we seldom find in State papers and public despatches; and the illustrations with which he enforces his arguments are derived from the most varied sources. "I pray you," he writes to Cecil with reference to the succession, "that the Queen's Majesty may know my opinion, and this withal: *Multa cadunt inter calicem supremaque labra*. In things uncertain which do depend *a futuro eventu*, more frankness may be used to put our estate in security and quietness. I think you have heard the apologue of the philosopher who, for the emperor's pleasure, took upon him to make a mule speak. In many years the like may yet be—either the mule, the philosopher, or the emperor may die before the time be fully run out."¹ In another letter he advises his correspondent to read "the twa former orations of Demosthenes called *Olynthiacæ*," and consider what counsel that wise

¹ 9th August 1561.

orator gave in a like case to the Athenians his countrymen. "There may ye learn of him what advice is to be followed when your neighbour's house is on fire."¹ He warns Throckmorton that French gold is coming into the country, and that the Scottish nobles are extremely impecunious. "I remember," he adds, "an old verse of Chaucer — 'with empty hand men should no hawkis lure' — *sapienta pauca*."² The whole of the curious correspondence with Sussex, in which the morality of his conduct and the consistency of his policy are forcibly vindicated, sparkles with classical innuendo and learned repartee. Elizabeth declared that Sussex had the best of the argument; he had worsted "the flower of the wits of Scotland": but Elizabeth on that occasion was a partial witness. The Catholic bishops complained, with perfect justice, that Maitland had "a crafty head and a *fell* tongue."³ Many of his *mots* have become historical; and he was probably one of the men who speak better than they write; but though the style is sometimes involved and the allusions obscure, his letters are on the whole extremely interesting.

¹ 20th January 1560. Robertson says that this letter is by Maitland; the compiler of the Cottonian Catalogue inclines apparently to attribute it to

Knox.

² 10th June 1561.

³ "Fell" in the sense of artful or persuasive

The best testimony, however, to the peculiar attractiveness of Lethington's character, is to be found in the devotion of his friends. The sweetness of a finely balanced nature was even more winning than its intellectual force. The satirists of the Congregation laboured hard to account for the fascination; but their theories were discordant and inadequate. Now it was "Machiavelli"; now it was the Old Serpent, who tempted Eve in Eden, and who, for some inscrutable reason, had been permitted to return to trouble the people of the Lord. The affectionate interest with which the smallest details of his domestic life were regarded, has preserved many slight but characteristic traits which would otherwise have been lost. Envoys and diplomatists turned aside from affairs of State to record the progress of his flirtation with Mary Fleming. Mary Fleming was the flower of the Marys. She was the Queen's favourite maid. After the Chastelar incident they occupied the same room and slept in the same bed; at the innocent merrymakings of a pleasant, homely, uncourtly life, against which Knox inveighed as though they had been the midnight orgies of a Messalina, the Queen would deck her out in her own robes and jewels.¹

¹ Mary Fleming indeed had the royal Stuart blood in her veins,—she was the granddaughter of Janet Stuart, the

illegitimate daughter of James IV. by Isobel Stewart, daughter of the Earl of Buchan.

Maitland's first wife—Janet Menteith—was dead, and he fell in love with the fair daughter of Lord Fleming. His passion was the talk of the town. There was much jesting among the courtiers—many humorous gibes from friend and foe. "The Secretary's wife is dead," Kirkaldy wrote, "and he is a suitor for Mary Fleming, who is as meet for him as the writer is to be a page." Later on we learn that Maitland was expected to join the Lennox faction, "for the love he beareth to Mary Fleming." Randolph in especial made very merry at his friend's expense. "My old friend Lethington hath leisure to make love ; and in the end, I believe, as wise as he is, he will show himself a very fool, and stark staring mad." But Maitland took the badinage in good part, and a letter which he sent to Cecil at the time, is written in riotous spirits and with almost boyish abandon. The anxious minister of Queen Elizabeth, whose devotion to business is so pleasantly censured, must have been somewhat astonished when he found this letter upon his table among his graver despatches. He had of late—Maitland wrote—been somewhat perplexed, understanding that Cecil was sick, the rather that he could not ascertain whether it was the cough which universally did reign, or other more dangerous disease, that troubled him. He was glad to hear that he was better, but would not be fully

reassured until he had a letter from him written with his own hand. "I am not *tam cupidus rerum novarum*, that I desire any change; and if my fortune should lead me to England again, I wish not to have occasion to make any new acquaintance." The English minister was not faultless, and reformation at his age was hardly to be looked for; but though he did not like Cecil much, he might like his successor still less! "Therefore, however far I dislike you, I wish you to do well to yourself, and suffer neither the evil weather nor the evil world to kill you. As there are in you many good parts which I miss in myself, so I find in me one great virtue whereof, for your commodity, I wish you a portion; to wit, the common affairs do never so much trouble me, but that at least I have one merry hour of the four-and-twenty; whereas you labour continually without intermission, nothing considering that the body, yea, and the mind also, must sometime have recreation, or else they cannot long last. Such physic as I do minister for myself, I appoint for you. Marry! you may perhaps reply that, as now the world doth go with me, my body is better disposed to digest such than yours is (for those that are in love are ever set upon a merry pin!); yet I take this to be a most sovereign remedy for all diseases in all persons. You see how I abuse my leisure, and do

trouble your occupations with matters of so light moment. It is not for lack of a more grave subject; but that I purposely forbear it—not knowing in what sort I may touch it and avoid offence. I will, with better devotion, look for other matter in your next letter, than for any answer to this foolish letter of mine—except indeed to be advertised of your convalescence. You can impart those news to none that will be more glad of them. Like as, if you will command anything that lieth in my power conveniently to do, you will find none, next your son, over whom you have more authority. And so, after my most hearty commendations, I take my leave.—From Edinburgh the last of February 1564,¹ yours at command,
W. MAITLAND.”

In fine, Maitland's was one of the *governing minds* of the age in which he lived. The num-

¹ That is, 1565. Lethington's reckoning was of course different from ours. The Julian style, which was then about ten days behind the true time, was universal throughout Western Europe till Pope Gregory XIII.'s correction of the calendar in 1582, and the change from 25th March to 1st January (adopted in France in 1564) was not made in Scot-

land till 1600, nor in England till 1752. The letter which Lethington dates “the last of February 1564,” was, according to our present reckoning, written on 11th March 1565. It is unnecessary to alter the days of the months, but, to avoid confusion, it is best to adhere uniformly to 1st January as the beginning of the year.

ber of such men at any particular period is as a rule extremely limited—much more so than is commonly supposed. I am inclined to hold that, at the period of which I am writing, there were not above three or four men of distinctly original and creative force in the whole island, from John-o'-Groats to the Land's End. In England they had Cecil; in Scotland, John Knox and William Maitland. Cecil's "brothers in Christ"—the envoys and emissaries of the English Government—were men of a specifically inferior order, who derived their inspiration from their master, and who, when deprived of his guidance, of the habitual support of his cautious but fertile brain, showed themselves, almost without exception, extraordinarily helpless. Cecil was partly to blame, no doubt,—his industry was so prodigious that he monopolised the whole business of administration, and his subordinates, having no opportunity of acquiring the rudiments of the art, were, when left to their own resources, unmanned by the unwonted sense of responsibility. There are eminent writers who would be prepared to place the Earl of Moray beside Knox and Maitland and Cecil. It appears to me that Moray belongs to another class altogether,—the class of men whose mental processes are slow, involved, and dependent. It was a common saying later on, when he came

to be Regent, that Moray was the hand and Morton the head; and during the earlier and brighter years of Mary's reign, it might have been said quite as truly—with even greater truth indeed—that if Moray was the hand, Maitland was the head. The radical energy, the illuminating force, came from Maitland; and we do not, I think, meet with any other man in Scotland at the time—Knox, and perhaps Morton, excepted—who possessed the high and rare gift of ruling men in so marked and eminent a degree.

I have said that a statesman in Lethington's position must be judged less by his actions than by his aims. What were his aims? We shall see, as we proceed, that they involved the determination of political and religious questions of the first importance. *How to diminish the power of an anarchical nobility, how to promote the union of the nations, how to secure the succession to a Scottish prince, how to establish a religious peace on tolerable conditions*—these were the problems to which, as a Scottish Protestant and a Scottish patriot, Maitland addressed himself; and it will be found, I believe, that the secular and ecclesiastical policy which he steadily and consistently pursued, was upon the whole as just as it was reasonable. His field of action was comparatively narrow; but the issues of the

conflict in which he was engaged were momentous and far-reaching. He knew that they were so; and the spirit in which he worked was largely affected by the knowledge. "Remember, the end of this service is not as many other wars have been; this will serve our posterity; and therefore bestow your knowledge and travel. And though the journey have many difficulties, yet is it more honorable being hardly obtained. Fare you well, and speed you."

END OF VOLUME ONE.

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